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THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING OF MIGRANTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Abstract:	*The article aims to investigate the impact of the migration phenomenon in the European Union (EU). It briefly examines the concept of smuggling of migrants and the main routes of illegal migration as well as the measures adopted by the EU institutions, in view of the priorities set by the EU institutions and the Member States, to step up efforts to establish an effective, humanitarian, and safe European migration policy.* *The article also pays particular attention to the illegal nature of this phenomenon and highlights the multiple and far-reaching implications of the activities surrounding illegal migration which generate and reinforce numerous other criminal activities.*
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Introduction

Migration. A gain or slavery without chains?[1]

 1.8 million years ago, HomoErectus migrated from Africa to Eurasia in search of better survival conditions. No wonder humans settled in the environment that offered them the best conditions, which should not be controversial. Today,

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[1]”Figures on abuses of foreign legal workers vary, but the methods are the same. It's slavery without chains. Rarely do perpetrators resort to violence or threats of violence, as the workers targeted are buried in debt even before they leave their home countries. The danger of being fired and deported is enough”. Editorial,”New York Times” "Forced Labor", (7 September 2010)

our globalized society is the result of countless migrations. Such movements have been essential factors in the formation of mankind: from the beginning, man has known nothing but migration: one could say that after so much cultural diversity, citizenship, ethnicity, or skin color should no longer matter. However, this is only a dream that has yet to become reality. It can be realized if we understand the advantages of migration, but also its inherent disadvantages[1].

A particularly important factor for the European Union is the integration of migrants. The successful integration[2] of migrants is essential for the well-being, prosperity, and future cohesion of European societies. While the main responsibility for integration lies with the Member States, the EU supports national and local authorities, helping them to coordinate their policies and share knowledge and providing them with financial resources.

Integration is a concept that is only valid when foreigners, and migrants, are ready to take the step to integrate into their adopted country. The language of the adoptive country, at least at a conversational level, is an advantage and is one of the most important factors of integration into the local society. However, there is never a complete integration: every migrant comes with a baggage of cultural experiences and customs, which are part of his/her personality and way of being.

Opinions in society are thus divided: some see migration as a contribution to society, and others see it as a source of dissent. But many destination countries see migration as a trigger for conflict rather than a means of cultural enrichment. Although migration has the potential to teach us a lot and allow both sides to develop in harmony, it is often abused for lack of common ground. This often leads to misunderstandings between locals and immigrants.

Migration is the movement of people (individuals, families, or groups) from one place to another with the intention of settling permanently or temporarily in a new location. Migration can be voluntary (job-seeking) or forced (war, natural disasters). Depending on the migrant's place of origin, there are two types of migration in the European Union (EU): intra-EU migration (from one Member State to another) and extra-EU migration (outside the EU)[3].

Illegal trafficking of migrants

Migrant smuggling, like global criminal activity, is influenced by poverty, and political and social instability, and so is transit or unauthorized stay in the EU. This transit to EU states can sometimes be extremely dangerous, and traffickers

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[1] Ștefan Romulus Lazăr, *Migration-an advantage, not a burden*, https://www.goethe.de/prj/fok/ro/akt/21609357.html, (25.07.2022)
[2] European Commission, *Inclusion of migrants and refugees in cities*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development/priority-themes-eu-cities/inclusion-migrants-and-refugees-cities_ro, (25.07.2022)
[3]Alina Ligia Dumitrescu, *Fenomenul migratiei în UE*, in "Revista de Economie Mondială", Vol. 10, No. 2, 2018, pp. 82-96

frequently expose migrants to both life-threatening risks and violence. The loss of life in the Mediterranean demonstrates the need for a strong and urgent EU response.

The smuggling of migrants by sea is one of the most dangerous forms of migrant smuggling and often requires serious humanitarian assistance. To save the lives of those in danger at sea, the coastguard and naval services of EU countries are making major efforts with the assistance of the European Border and Coastguard Agency (FRONTEX). Since the height of the migration crisis in 2015, the EU has put in place and continues to implement measures to improve control of external borders and migration flows. As a result, illegal arrivals in the EU have been reduced by more than 90%[1].

Most illegal migrants initially enter the EU legally on short-stay visas but remain in the EU for economic reasons once their visa expires. Effective and credible management of external borders is essential. The EU has developed an integrated border management strategy, which aims to maintain a high level of security using information technology such as the Visa Information System and biometrics (e.g., fingerprints) for identification.

Illegal migration is a form of organized crime which, because of its scale and the sophisticated way it is carried out, has direct consequences for the economic, social, and security situation in the countries of transit of migrants[2] or refugees[3] and in the countries of destination.

Illegal migration routes

Frontex[4], the European Authority responsible for border management and control of the European Schengen Area, coordinates the border and coast guards of the member states of the Schengen Area. They collect monthly data on illegal migrants arriving in Europe via the main South-North migration routes, which are the Central Mediterranean, the Albania/Greece Circular Route, the Eastern Land Border, the Eastern Mediterranean, West Africa, the Western Balkans, and the Western Mediterranean.

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[1] Frontex is the European Authority in charge of border management and control of the European Schengen Area, in coordination with the border and coast guards of Schengen Area member states. They collect monthly data on irregular migrants arriving in Europe through major South-North migration routes, which are Central Mediterranean, Circular route from Albania/Greece, Eastern Land Border, Eastern Mediterranean, Western African, Western Balkans, Western Mediterranean, http://frontex.europa.eu/, (9.11.2022)

[2] Frontex, *Migratory Map*, https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-map/, (27.05.2022)

[3] *Idem*

[4] Frontex, *Frontex provides support for Lithuania, Latvia at their borders with Belarus,* https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-provides-support-for-lithuania-latvia-at-their-borders-with-belarus-hqTC5M, (25.07.2022)

Route	Zones included[1]
Black Sea	Bulgaria and Romania sea borders
Central Mediterranean	Italy and Malta sea borders
Circular route from Albania to Greece	Greece's land border with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Eastern Land Borders	Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Norway land borders with Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russian Federation
Eastern Mediterranean	Cyprus, Greece sea border, Greece, and Bulgaria land borders with Turkey
Other	Areas not included in the other routes. E.g.: Baltic Sea, North Sea.
Western African	Canary Islands
Western Balkans	Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Croatia at the land borders with countries from the Western Balkan region
Western Mediterranean	Spain's land and sea borders without the Canary Islands

Central-Mediterranean route

The stretch of the Mediterranean Sea between North Africa and Italy is one of the main migration routes to Europe, although the number of arrivals has declined since the peak years of 2014-2016.

The figures made available by Frontex show that in 2021[2], the central-Mediterranean route continued to be the most used route to Europe, with 67,724 migrants detected, respectively an increase of 90% compared to the previous year and representing 23% (or approximately one quarter) of all illegal crossings reported at external borders.

It was also noted that Libya was the main country of departure, but departures from the coasts of Tunisia and Turkey also contributed to increased migratory pressure along this route.

Tunisian migrants were most frequently detected in this region, although many Egyptian migrants were also recorded in 2021, a number increasing almost sevenfold compared to the previous year. Bangladeshi citizens were also among the top nationalities detected.

Central-Mediterranean route

On this route, the numbers remained at the same level as the previous year, namely 20,567[3] (in 2021), but a decrease in illegal border crossings in Greece was

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[1] Frontex, *Migratory Map*, https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-map/, (27.05.2022)
[2] *Idem*
[3] *Idem*

noted, as well as an increase in migration to Cyprus, compared to previous years, growth driven by a higher proportion of Africans among detected migrants.

Western Mediterranean route

In recent years, on this route (which stretches across the sea between Spain, Morocco, and Algeria) migration has increased significantly with a record of over 56,000 detections registered in 2018[1]. It should be noted, moreover, that this route was also the main route used by criminal networks to bring drugs into Europe.

The number of arrivals in Europe on the Western Mediterranean route increased slightly in 2021 as 18,466 cases were reported. Algeria was the main country of departure. Algerians and Moroccans continued to remain the main migrant nationalities detected on this route.

West African route

The West Africa Route links Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, and Morocco (including the Western Sahara region) with the Canary Islands in Spain. In response to the steep increase in arrivals in the Canary Islands in the second half of 2020, Frontex has mobilized officers to support the authorities in collecting and sharing information. After remaining relatively low for many years, the number of migrants choosing this route to Europe started to increase in 2018 and reached an all-time high in 2020. This increase in arrivals is partly due to measures taken by many African countries to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hindered movement along traditional migration routes and worsened social and economic conditions in many countries of origin.

In 2021, the total number of illegal border crossings was 22,504, remaining at the same level as in 2020. It can be seen from Frontex statistics[2] that migration pressure was reached, as in previous years, in September and the main nationality detected was Moroccan, followed by various West African nations.

Western Balkans route

The Western Balkans route was one of the main migration routes to Europe, reflecting the influx along the Eastern Mediterranean route. After the record number of arrivals in the European Union in 2015, the number of illegal migrants choosing this route has been steadily decreasing for several years and has started to increase again since 2019.

In 2021 the Western Balkans route was the second most used route to Europe as detections of illegal border crossings doubled to a total of 61,735. As in previous years, they mostly used the southern common borders with Greece and Bulgaria before heading north and trying to leave the region mostly at the northern common borders of Hungary, Romania Croatia, or Serbia.

Eastern land borders

On the 6000-kilometer land border between Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the eastern EU Member States - Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania - the scale of

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[1] *Idem*

[2] *Idem*

illegal migration has been much lower than on other migration routes. However, this route to Europe still presents significant challenges for border control, and in 2021 experienced unprecedented migration pressure. A record of 8,184 illegal border crossings was detected, an increase of more than tenfold compared to 2020.

This significant increase was artificially created by the Lukashenko regime and there was intense migration pressure with continuous border crossing attempts in all three EU Member States neighboring Belarus, prompting them to declare a state of emergency.

In the summer of 2021, Frontex deployed European permanent corps teams to Lithuania and Latvia to support the countries in responding to increased migration pressure[1].

Canal route[2]

This migration route from mainland Europe to the UK became increasingly active even before the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on 31 January 2020 and increased exponentially in 2021 after the Brexit transition period.

In 2021, over 52,000 illegal border crossings (IBCs) by small craft were detected on both sides of the Channel, a 241% increase from the previous year. France and Belgium detected around 22,000 attempted crossings at sea, while over 30,000 successful crossings were detected by UK border authorities.

In response to increased migration pressure, Frontex deployed an aircraft to the Channel in December 2021 to support Member States with air surveillance.

Routes through Romania

Geographically, Romania is at the crossroads of several migration routes, starting from the Middle East, South-East Asia, and Africa, and the Romanian area is considered mainly a transit and temporary residence area for migrants, regardless of their origin.

In terms of migration routes, the major corridors currently crossing the region may undergo changes, depending on the measures adopted by the countries through which they transit.

The routes that may be used more intensively by migrants, and which transit Romania, are:

- the eastern maritime route (on the Black Sea).
- Southern land route (Asia/North Africa - Syria/Iraq - Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania - Hungary - Western/Northern European countries).

Romania, which is not one of the countries directly affected by the migratory flow created by the movement of populations from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia towards the European continent, is engaged in the

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[1]Frontex, *Frontex provides support for Lithuania, and Latvia at their borders with Belarus*, https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-provides-support-for-lithuania-latvia-at-their-borders-with-belarus-hqTC5M, (25.07.2022)
[2]Frontex, *Migratory Routes*, https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-routes/the-channel-route/, (25.07.2022)

European effort to control and put the crisis under coherent and articulated coordination or monitoring.

Thus, the Romanian authorities are consistent in their attitude towards the European policy on the phenomenon, as reflected in the operational contribution to joint missions (it is the second largest contributor among the Member States, after Germany, to the FRONTEX missions in Greece and Italy)[1].

In November 2015, the Valletta Migration Summit[2] brought together European and African heads of state and government to strengthen cooperation and address the current challenges and opportunities of migration.

Summit leaders adopted a political declaration and an action plan to:
• address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement;
• strengthen cooperation on legal migration and mobility;
• strengthen the protection of migrants and asylum seekers;
• prevent and combat irregular migration, smuggling of migrants, and trafficking of human beings;
• closer cooperation to improve teamwork on return, readmission, and reintegration.

Romania will have to assume the role of the eastern border of the European Union, as it is well known that, at the world level, at least from a demographic point of view, but also from the point of view of the difficulties encountered economically, Asia is considered the main migratory reservoir of the 21st century, and we are linked to this continent by a green border, relatively easy to cross, and the legal/illegal migration routes already formed are sufficiently flexible and able to adapt to the circumstantial changes[3].

The effects of illegal migration

The perpetuation of political and military instability in areas with migration potential, the precariousness of the standard of living felt by large masses of the population in many external spaces, combined with the flexible attitude and inventiveness of members of criminal networks, interested in obtaining substantial income, who find solutions in real-time to the restrictions or repressive actions of the authorities, are factors that favor the maintenance of the phenomenon of illegal migration at significant levels, including in Europe[4].

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[1] Georgiana Chirilă, *Migrația ilegală sau cum se importă riscurile de securitate*, www.intelligence.sri.ro, (26.07.2022)
[2] *Planul de acțiune al Summit-ului de la Valletta 2015*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21839/action_plan_en.pdf, (26.07.2022)
[3] Daniela-Luminița Constantin, Valentina Vasile, Diana Preda, Luminița Nicolescu, *Studiul nr. 5, Fenomenul migraționist din perspectiva aderării României la Uniunea Europeană*, Institutul European din România, București, 2004, p. 7
[4] Georgiana Chirilă, *Migrația ilegală sau cum se importă riscurile de securitate*, www.intelligence.sri.ro, (26.07.2022)

The increase in migratory flows from conflict zones in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, which are dominated by instability and poverty, coupled with the humanitarian crises that accompany the often-unsuccessful attempts to reach European shores, is a sign of the pressure to which the countries on the migrants' travel routes are exposed[1].

The blocking of illegal transit at EU borders has taken on new dimensions due to the recent migration phenomenon, with the prevention work carried out by public order and security forces being a specific challenge for the cross-border crime.

The danger associated with the phenomenon of organized crime is maintained by the existence of areas largely unused and uncontrolled by law enforcement, of course, the phenomenon is maintained by the continuous adaptation of strategies and routes to areas outside the control of public order forces.

As a key destination for this phenomenon of illegal migration, EUROPOL and INTERPOL intervene through legal and operational capacities to identify the modus operandi, routes and structure of criminal groups involved in illegal migration. The Migrant Smuggling Networks[2] report jointly produced by Europol and Interpol in May 2016 shows that more than 90% of migrants arriving in European countries used the services of smuggling networks at least at some point during their journey. The report also shows that facilitators are organized and work with multinational networks, spread along migration routes (in and out of the EU), in more than 250 hotspots for illegal migrant smuggling.

The report also shows that facilitators are organized and work with multinational networks, spread along migratory routes (in and outside the EU), in over 250 hotspots for illegal migrant smuggling. The basic structure of the networks includes leaders who loosely coordinate activities along a given route, organizers who manage activities at the local level through personal contacts, and opportunistic facilitators, who earn illicit income from guiding activities along certain segments of the route. In some cases, facilitating migration to the EU has become a traditional occupation for local families and groups in North Africa[3].

It is worth noting that migrant smuggling is a highly profitable method of doing business, involving low overall running costs and smuggling operations carried out on a demand-for-services basis. It has also been shown that legally established businesses are used, and the main vulnerable sectors include catering, hotels, transport companies, shops, hairdressers, internet cafes, and travel agencies. These businesses can be used along the routes to support network facilitation

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[1] Raluca Galaon, *Migranţii: Poveşti de milioane de dolari,* https://intelligence.sri.ro/migrantii-povesti-de-milioane-de-dolari/, (25.07.2022)
[2] Europol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks-Joint Europol-INTERPOL Report*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/ep-ip_report_executive_summary.pdf, (27.07.2022)
[3] *Idem*

activities (e.g., by providing logistical support) but also to launder the incomes of smuggling activities[1].

An example of limiting the activities of illegal migration groups was EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia. The operation's main mission is to contribute to the EU's efforts to undermine the activities of smugglers and traffickers in the central-southern Mediterranean. The operation also had several supporting missions, such as providing training for the Libyan coastguard and naval forces, monitoring the long-term effectiveness of the training, and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya. In addition, the operation has been conducting surveillance activities and collecting intelligence on illegal oil exports from Libya in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. The operation contributed imperatively to the EU's efforts to restore stability and security in Libya, as well as to maritime security in the Central Mediterranean region[2], thus the mission's main mandate was to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and assets used or suspected of being used by smugglers or traffickers of migrants and to prevent further loss of life at sea.

EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia was launched on 22 June 2015. It is part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration. The Operation Commander is Italian Rear Admiral Credendino. The operation's headquarters is in Rome.

Beyond efforts to reduce illegal activities, the authorities involved in the operation have obtained evidence of an operational pattern depending on the area of origin of the migrants. For example, more than 100 Senegalese who were captured admitted that each had been financed by the local communities from which they came, on condition that, once in Europe, they would send the money to Senegal for other members of the community. Eritreans use intermediaries in Tripoli to provide accommodation and shipping for new arrivals.

We note that the trend towards poly-criminality is one of the major effects of the illegal trafficking of migrants

Given that suspects involved in illegal migration activities already have a consistent criminogenic background, the poly-criminality associated with the phenomenon is increasing. Migrants arriving in the EU are vulnerable to drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, and illegal or undeclared labor.

Documents produced by the European Commission show that criminal groups are taking advantage of the dysfunction created by the migration crisis in

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[1] UNODC, *Smuggling of Migrants, A Global Review and Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications*, https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-muggling/Smuggling_of_Migrants_A_Global_Review.pdf,
(28.07.2022)

[2] European Council, *EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia: mandate extended until 30 September 2019*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2019/03/29/eunavfor-med-operation-sophia-mandate-extended-until-30-september-2019/, (28.07.2022)

Europe to subject more people to prostitution and slavery. Specifically, the authors of the report pointed to the "worrying increase in the number of Nigerian women and girls being transported via Libya to Italy"[1].

As minors have become the preferred targets of human traffickers, fears about the fate of unaccompanied refugee children have intensified. Although the number of people who have fallen victim to criminal gangs is not estimated, the report "Communication on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration" warned that child trafficking has been increased by the current migration crisis. Criminal gangs choose to traffic children aged between 6 months and 10 years because they are easier to manipulate. Children are sold for between €4,000 and €8,000, although there have been cases where as much as €40,000 has been paid[2].

The exploitation of these vulnerabilities has been identified as a risk factor related to illegal migration in the National Strategy for Public Order and Security 2015-2020. According to the document, the migration phenomenon manifests itself in various forms, "the most common being the illegal crossing of green borders between crossing control points, hiding in various means of transport and the use by migrants of forged or counterfeit identity or travel documents or valid documents belonging to other holders".

The migrants have provoked mixed reactions from the population of the host European countries. Some members of the host communities who have benefited from immigrants (used them as a cheap labor force) have taken advantage of the situation and developed their businesses or solved the problems caused by the lack of labor in some sectors. Others, especially after the recent economic crisis, have expressed their dissatisfaction at losing their jobs to immigrants willing to work in harsh conditions and for lower wages[3].

Immigration has also been taken up as a theme for speeches by politicians in countries affected by migration. Some of them have preferred to draw attention to the negative consequences of immigration and have highlighted the relationship between increased crime and immigration. This idea has also been taken up by some European researchers interested in the issue of immigrants in Europe. For example, many Italians associated the increase in crime with the presence of immigrants in their country, and this view of Italians was the result of the way the Italian media presented immigrants.

Since politicians/citizens/journalists' discourses have frequently conveyed the idea of increased crime in communities with large numbers of immigrants,

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[1] Raluca Galaon, *Migranții: Povești de milioane de dolari*, https://intelligence.sri.ro/migrantii-povesti-de-milioane-de-dolari, (25.07.2022)
[2] Comisia Europeană, *Implementing the European Agenda on Migration: Progress on Priority Actions*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_271, (28.07.2022)
[3] Ecaterina Balica, *Migrație, criminalitate și siguranță personală în marile orașe europene*, in "Revista Română de Criminologie, Criminalistica și Penologie", No. 3-4, 2016

researchers have sought to test this hypothesis. Few studies in the European area, however, have addressed the relationship between crime and immigration. In his paper, Bell and colleagues studied the possible effects of crime in two recent large flows of immigrants into the UK economy. These large flows provide an opportunity for attention to evaluating whether the populist view that immigrants can cause crime. Their evidence supports the analysis of the crime-immigration relationship and sets out a general conclusion that focusing on the limited opportunities for asylum seekers in the labor market could have a beneficial effect in reducing crime[1].

The situation was slightly different for studies that linked immigration status and exposure to violence against women. Several studies in Europe have drawn attention to violence against immigrant women.

Thus, Marta Perez's study analyses the humanitarian clause in the Spanish immigration law concerning beaten women (without identity documents). In Spain, beaten women (without identity documents) who accuse their male partners of abuse and win legal cases against them become eligible for five-year residence and work permits. Women who lose the case must be deported. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have criticized the arbitrary application of the clause, arguing that the protection of abused women should take precedence over legal status. Putting this argument in dialogue with philosophical and anthropological studies, this study shows how NGO advocacy strategy could conceal the close link between gender-based violence and the legal status of migrant women who do not have identity documents[2].

In the article "Social and immigration factors in intimate partner violence among Ecuadorians, Moroccans, and Romanians living in Spain", the authors conducted a cross-sectional study on 1607 adult immigrant women living in Barcelona, Madrid, and Valencia (2011). Different personal (demographic), family, social support, and immigration status characteristics of women were considered as explanatory and control variables. All analyses were divided according to women's country of origin.

The data for Moroccan, Romanian, and Ecuadorian women living in Spain were similar. The index regarding intimate partner violence was recorded to be very high among Romanian women in vulnerable social situations, and in the case of Moroccan and Ecuadorian women, this index seems to be evenly distributed.

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[1] Brian Bell, Stephen Machin, Francesco Fasani, *Crime, and Immigration: Evidence from Large Immigrant Waves*, London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Economic performance. 2010, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/59323/1/CEP_Bell_Fasani_Machin_Crime-and-immigration_2013.pdf, (28.07.2022)

[2] Marta Perez, *Emergency Frames: Gender Violence and Immigration Status in Spain*, in "Feminist Economics", 2012, pp. 265-290, (28.07.2022)

The importance of intervention in separation and divorce processes was common to all women[1].

Migrant smuggling is a crime that is interdependent with human trafficking, document forgery, drug trafficking, and benefits fraud. According to the European Commission report[2] - Communication on the state of implementation of the priority actions under the European Agenda on Migration – "the migration crisis has been exploited by criminal networks involved in human trafficking to target the most vulnerable, especially women and children".

Conclusions

According to migration theories, in the context of formulating public policies on migration in the EU, a clear distinction must be made between economically motivated migrants, who are generally in search of better-paid jobs and are mostly young, entrepreneurial, skilled, and political migrants or refugees, among whom there are many people who cannot be active on the labor market (children, elderly people), but also people with low qualifications, who are much more vulnerable to discrimination, both on the labor market and in society, and require additional social protection from the state[3].

The smuggling of migrants into and within the EU and trafficking in human beings are considered major criminal threats for the EU[4] and are among the priorities set by the Council for the fight against serious and organized crime. Both practices use human beings as a source of profit. The smuggling of migrants and the trafficking of human beings are different crimes. Migrant smuggling is a globally widespread crime that endangers the lives of migrants and threatens the integrity of international borders. It is a lucrative type of criminal activity for

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[1] Carmen Vives-Cases, Jordi Torrubiano-Domínguez, Diana Gil-González, Daniel La Parra, Andrés A. Agudelo-Suárez, M. Carmen Davó, M. Carmen Pérez-Beldaand, M. Asunción Martínez-Román, *Social and Immigration factors in intimate partner violence among Ecuadorians, Moroccans and Romanians living in Spain*, in "European Journal of Public Health" Vol. 24, No. 4, 2014, pp. 605-61

[2] European Commission, *European Agenda on Migration: further efforts needed to sustain progress*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/IP_18_1763, (28.07.2022)

[3] Alina Ligia Dumitrescu, *Fenomenul migratiei în UE*, in "Revista de Economie Mondială", Vol. 10, No. 2/2018, pp. 82-96

[4] Europol, *European Union Serious, and Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2017*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/european-union-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2017, (28.07.2022)

organized criminal groups[1] and has posed a major humanitarian and security threat to the EU in recent years[2].

Multi-disciplinary cooperation between EU Member States, EU third states, EU institutions, and agencies, as well as other relevant actors such as Interpol, is at the core of the fight against criminal threats. Transnational cooperation implies an awareness of the need to articulate and strengthen the efforts of all states to combat and control international criminal forces and groups.

Transnational criminal acts and crimes, such as grand corruption, money laundering, mafia-type activities, and terrorism, affect an increasing number of States and represent a real threat to democracy and to the implementation of various reforms in the political, economic, financial, and social spheres while respecting the principles of the rule of law[3].

Given the legislative instruments developed by the EU institutions, as well as prevention and enforcement measures, we can simply conclude that the EU's interest in the detection and subsequent prosecution in the Member States is very high. This interest is often in competition with the parallel activity of criminal organizations and perpetrators within the territory of EU Member States, who are proving increasingly capable of establishing alliances and operating across borders throughout Europe, which enhances efforts at the EU level. All the above measures strengthen the international legal basis for the fight against the organization of illegal migration, with the aim of limiting the number of illegal migrants and reducing the activities of criminal structures involved in the organization of illegal migration.

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