

On the Edge

Refugees, Europe and the Turkey deal

Gerald Knaus – Oslo 22 April 2016



Why 2015 was extraordinary

Why the Aegean is special

Why it matters to global geopolitics

„Normal years“: detections at all EU external borders (Frontex)

2009: 104,600

2010: 104,000

2011: 141,100

2012: **72,400**

2013: 107,400

2014: 283,532

2015: **1 million**

2015: Greece 800,000 – in Lesbos alone 500,000



EU giving protection in 2015

	Asylum Applications	Positive decisions
2015	1,322,000	308,000
2013	EU	132,000
	US	21,000
	Canada	7,817
	Australia	5,035
	Japan	158
	(without resettlements)	

Outlier Sweden



2013

Asylum granted: 26,000

Resettlement: 1,832

Arriving in 2015: 190,000

The politics of this crisis

The refugee crisis as „opportunity“



„End of a liberal era“ (5 Sep 2015)

Viktor Orban speech to his party:

"If we ... conceptually reflect on what is happening, then **we see that we have a huge opportunity**, if we fight well in this debate, to restore the prestige and appeal of national identity and Christian identity, **in opposition to the liberal identity.**"

„Self-defence and other rights“ (Nov 2015)

Viktor Orban:

“Of course it’s not accepted, but the factual point is that **all the terrorists** are basically migrants.” (in Politico)

"... we are faced with a question. Which approach is more humane: to close the borders in order to stop illegal immigration, **or to put at risk the lives of innocent European citizens?** The right to life takes **precedence over all other rights**, as does the right to self-defence ...”
(in Parliament)

Orban: fence off Greece (Jan 2016)

Viktor Orban to newspaper:

“... using our own resources we must build a new European **line of defence** one country further in: on the northern border of Greece. And that is where we must **stop – not just slow down**, but stop – immigration.”

Orban: Brussels treason (15 March)

Viktor Orban:

“It is forbidden to say that **in Brussels they are constructing schemes** to transport foreigners here as quickly as possible and to settle them here among us ... Mass migration is like a slow and steady current of water which washes away the shore. It appears in the guise of humanitarian action, but its true nature is the occupation of territory; and **their gain in territory is our loss of territory.**”

[Glory to the heroes, honour to the brave’: PM Viktor Orban’s March 15 speech in full](#),”

Anti-refugee, anti-Brussels, anti-Muslim (pro-Putin) bloc



Australia as inspiration? Wilders, Strache ...



“The message is simple: if you come to Australia illegally by boat, there is no way you will ever make Australia home.”

“Let the European marine patrol in front of the North African coast and *return all immigrants without exceptions.*”



„18 month detention“

Donald Tusk in December 2015: „Detention in Greece for 18 months“

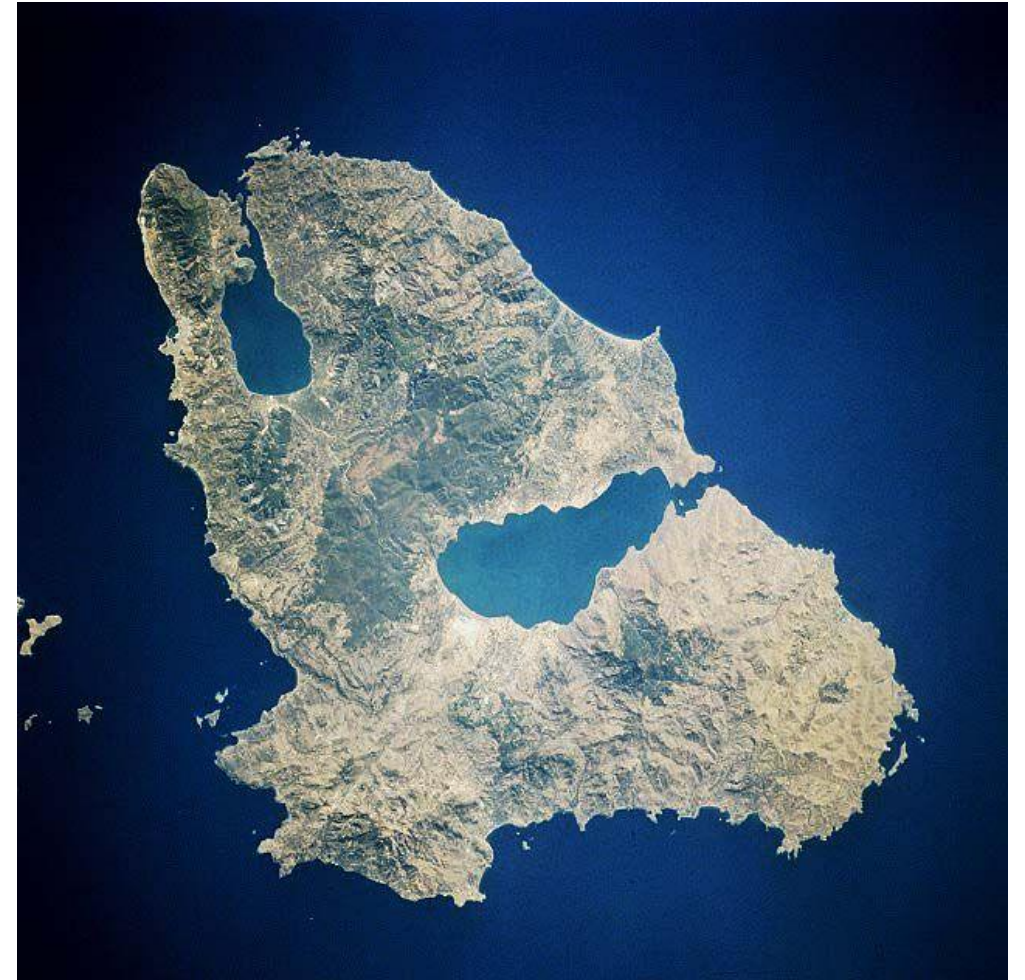
March 2016: “The Western Balkans route is closed.”



Greece as European Nauru?



Nauru



Lesbos

Why this policy is doomed in the Balkans



De facto still open borders

Macedonia: one of Europe's least stable states

This cannot work without Greek support

What is at stake today? A huge amount

Refugee convention – principle of *non-refoulement*

Stability in South East Europe

„Liberalism“ in the EU

Can the EU combine control *and* compassion?

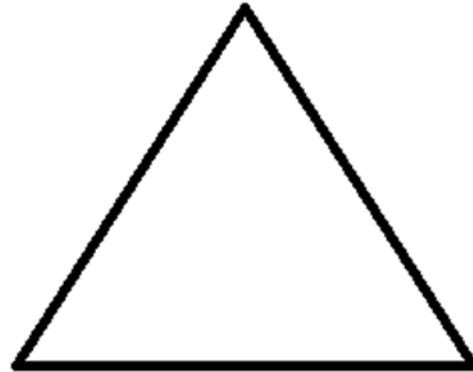
**The 18 March EU-Turkey deal:
a solution that can work**

„Why people do not need to drown in the Aegean“ ESI report - September 2015 (www.esiweb.org)



Triangle of commitments

German-led coalition: **Resettle** refugees directly from Turkey

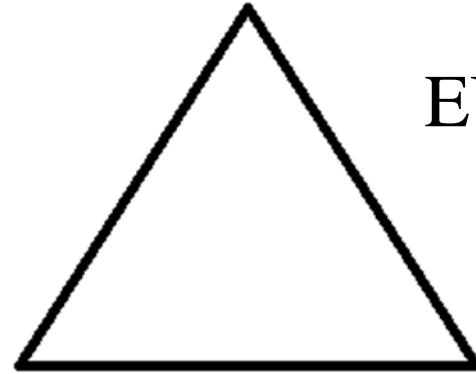


GREECE: Readmission of those
who are safe in Turkey

TURKEY: **Readmit** all
after a day X

Triangle of commitments

German-led coalition: **Resettle** refugees directly from Turkey



EU: visa free summer 2016
6 billions for refugees

GREECE: Readmission of those
who are safe in Turkey

TURKEY: **Readmit** all
after a day X

Angela Merkel – 7 October 2015

"We must better protect our external borders, but this is only possible if we reach **agreements with our neighbours, for example with Turkey**, on how to better **share the task** of dealing with the refugees. And this will mean more **money** for Turkey, which has many expenses because of the refugees. This will mean that we will **accept a set number of refugees**, in a way so that the human traffickers and smugglers in the Aegean will not earn money, but **in an orderly way**, this will also mean that we fulfil certain wishes of Turkey concerning the **visa issue**."

Diederik Samsom and Mark Rutte – Dec 2015



Readmission from Greece to Turkey. And:

“Turkey will accept them only if large numbers of recognized refugees can go to Europe from Turkey in a legal manner. A **legal asylum route for a couple of hundred thousand refugees per year**. Of this I [Samsom] convinced Mark [Rutte].”

Diederik Samsom, Dutch
Labour Party leader

Creation of Ankara group – early 2016



Breakthrough: Davutoglu's offer - 6 March



The core of the deal – 18 March

“In order to break the business model of the smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk ...“

“Migrants arriving in the Greek islands ... any application for asylum will be processed individually by the Greek authorities in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Directive ... Migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey.” (Point 1)

“Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated.” (Point 4)

The Aegean after 20 March

Daily Arrivals from Turkey in 2016

Date	Daily Greek islands
Daily average January	1,932
Daily average February	1,904
Daily average 1-20 March	1,148
Daily average 21-31 March	333
Daily average 1-14 April	144

What can go wrong now? Still a lot

1. **In Greece:** asylum and readmission
2. **In Turkey:** safety of those returned from Greece
3. **In Brussels:** EU visa decision in June 2016
4. **In Berlin:** voluntary resettlement from Turkey

Greek islands since March 20

Presently on the islands:	7,843	asylum seekers
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Lesbos	4,375	(capacity: 3,500)
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Chios	2,035	(capacity: 1,100)
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Asylum on the islands:	22 April:	13 Greek case workers
		21 EASO case workers

On 19 March the Commission had called for 600 case workers in total

Failure is an option: EU relocation story

Juncker on 9 September 2015: “The first priority today is addressing the refugee crisis ...”

He proposed relocation 160,000 refugees in total
 66,400 from Greece

11 April: 35,000 candidates for relocation in Greece
 2,943 “formal pledges”
 615 people relocated

66,400 vs. 615 (1 percent) in seven months!

What is needed for success

Rescue the Greek Asylum Service

“Case workers can reasonably be expected to issue a few dozen decisions a month ...” (Head of Service)

In March 2016:

271 staff – of this 130 case workers



NEEDED: an EU Asylum Support Mission

Pilot - flagship project; Athens to invite

Double headed: Greek head - EASO co-head
case workers from both, interpreters, EU pays costs

300 case workers:	300 cases a day
Work 20 days a month:	6,000 cases a month

Resolve all island cases by June. Help Greece with 46,000 people on the Greek mainland by end 2016. Those who get asylum to be relocated.

NEEDED: remove all doubt about Turkey as a safe third country for those returned

Syrians:	Regain temporary protection they had
Non-Syrians:	Guarantee option to apply for refugee status

(2015: 64,000 people did - 3,400 granted, 700 rejected).

Solution:	Turkish guarantees plus: Full transparency for all those who are returned Turkey invites EU / UNHCR to monitor this list Make openness key condition for visa liberalisation
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NEEDED: lift visa requirement in June

Commission will publish (positive) report in early May

Qualified majority voting end of June

Debate on safeguard clauses

NEEDED: resettlement in 2016

Political challenge: Who is - with Berlin - in Coalition of the Willing?

Technical challenge: How to resettle 150,000 people in a year?

All resettlement facilitated by UNHCR in the world:

2010	72,914
2011	61,649
2012	69,252
2013	71,411
2014	73,331

In conclusion, four concrete actions are needed:

Create a serious EU **Asylum Support Mission** to Greece (300)

Persuade Turkey to be fully transparent on those returned

Mobilise EU votes to lift visa requirement by June

Prepare – technically, politically – for serious voluntary resettlement

THIS IS *NO* DIRTY DEAL

“EU and Turkish leaders deal death blow to the right to seek asylum.”

Amnesty International, 8 March 2016

In fact:	2013 protection in EU:	132,000
	2013 resettlement (global):	less than 100,000

If fully implemented:	2016 more protection than ever
	2016 more resettlement than ever
	Non-refoulement preserved

The big question

Can CONTROL be restored, NOT at expense of another EU member, WITHOUT a fortress Europe?



www.esiweb.org/refugees

