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THE MASS MIGRATION AS A HYBRID THREAT TO EUROPEAN SECURITY

Introduction

The recent attempt of thousands of migrants¹ to illegally enter the Greek/European territory by crossing the Greek-Turkish borders in the area of River Evros, which was organized and assisted by the Turkish Authorities,² reminded in the most thunderous manner the colossal phenomenon of illegal inflow of migrants and refugees (with the status of asylum seeker), towards the European Union (EU), from places where conditions of economic hardship and war are prevailing. The core of the problem was initially identified in North Africa (Maghreb) and the Middle East (ME), but there is also illegal inflow from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, and other sub-saharanian states, where Sunnism is the predominant version of Islam.

Technicalities

According to international law, refugees,³ who are forced to displacement solely because of the wars and hostilities that take place in their homelands, are eligible for protection, exclusively, from bordering states. In the case at hand, the mass entrance of migrants in EU, (from Turkey, Algeria, etc.), is deemed illegal, as their status can neither be considered as immigrants,⁴ nor as refugees, given the fact that the EU does not border any warzone. Nonetheless, the majority, exploit the international law stipulations regarding asylum seekers, in order to receive protection.

¹ According to the International Rescue Committee: "A migrant is someone who is moving from place to place (within his or her country or across the borders), usually for economic reasons such as seasonal work. Similar to immigrants, they were not forced to leave their native countries because of persecution or violence, but rather are seeking better opportunities". International Rescue Committee, *Explainer*, 22 July 2018, Last updated 11 December 2018. <https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference>

² According to Der Spiegel, "Turkey instigated the clashes at the Greek border": "The Foreign Intelligence Services (BND) has indications that Turkey deliberately instigated the violent clashes at the Greek borders four weeks ago... the Turkish Authorities forcefully boarded the refugees on busses and transferred them to the border area. Turkish state forces mingled with the crowd and instigated the clashes at the fence", Der Spiegel, "Turkey instigated the clashes at the Greek border", *On Alert*, Athenian News Agency, *Macedonian Agency Press*, 27 March 2020.

³ According to the International Rescue Committee: "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home because of war, violence or persecution, often without warning. They are unable to return home unless and until conditions in their native lands are safe for them again". International Rescue Committee, *Explainer*, 22 July 2018, Last updated 11 December 2018. <https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference>

⁴ According to the International Rescue Committee: "An immigrant is someone who makes a conscious decision to leave his or her home and move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there. Immigrants often go through a lengthy vetting process to immigrate to a new country. Many become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens". Ibid.

This alarming peripheral trend, is considered extremely important in shaping the current, as well as the short and long-term future of the European security environment, as the inflow of immigrants is increasing exponentially, and despite the rational assumption that there is no central factor organizing and promoting the entire issue, this phenomenon might carry with it a hybrid threat.⁵

Before examining the case of immigration waves and why they might include the risk of a hybrid threat to European security the notion of hybrid threat must be analyzed. Technically, according to the United States Joint Forces Command hybrid threat is: "*any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a tailored mix of conventional, irregular, terrorism and criminal means or activities in the operational battle space*".⁶ In the same vein, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, along with the Community of Interest, 'Strategy and Defence', started strategic engagement in the Vienna Strategy Conference (24-28 June 2019), hosted by the National Defence Academy of Austria (Landesverteidigungsakademie (LAVAK)), concluded *inter alia* that: "*Hybrid warfare is strategic in nature. It combines the tailored use of hard, soft and smart power elements with asymmetric means and methods and potentially includes all levels of military escalation*".⁷ Similarly, asymmetric threat is referred to any non-conventional means and methods i.e. mass illegal immigration, that can be weaponized, and been amalgamated with any form of military action, at any phase of the asymmetric operation, elevating into a hybrid threat.

In macro-scale

On a macro-scale, mass immigration, especially the illegal, has shown, over the years the high degree of social vulnerability of the EU. Many analysts point to a number of possible threats and anxieties including the possible infiltration of terrorists within the immigrant population, the change in the population composition in Europe, where immigrants might form, over time, the majority, etc. Even more, asymmetry means and methods generated, and in combination with potential military actions (orthodox or unorthodox, state vs state or guerrilla warfare and internal conflicts among certain factions of population) consist a real hybrid threat for Europe. This threat is

⁵ According to The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats: "*The term hybrid threat refers to an action conducted by state or non-state actors, whose goal is to undermine or harm the target by influencing its decision-making at the local, regional, state or institutional level*". The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, Helsinki. <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/what-is-hybridcoe/>

⁶ "*Such 'hybrid' conflicts may consist of military forces assuming a non-state identity, as Russia did in Crimea, or may involve violent extremist organisations fielding rudimentary combined arms capabilities, as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has demonstrated in Iraq and Syria*". Batyuk, Vladimir, "The US Concept and Practice of Hybrid Warfare", Strategic Analysis, Vol. 41, Issue 5, August 2017, Taylor and Francis, pp. 464-77, London.

⁷ The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, "Hybrid CoE engages with the Vienna Strategy Conference", The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, 28-07-2019, Helsinki. <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/news/1121/>

heavily enhanced by illegal immigration. Any sovereign state, with a certain level of power and available means wishing to upset Europe and its strategic allies, can try to manipulate the silent, asymmetric force of the illegal immigrants, especially in the form of mass immigration, in order to puzzle or hinder European orderly functioning. No matter the degree of social integration of the new citizens of the European states, (which takes time), there are fears expressed regarding the changing of the, historically, solid palimpsest, of cultural values of Europe.

The temporary stay of the illegal migrants, in a given transit state tends to go permanent, creating parallel structures within the local social fabric. It is natural for the Europeans (ex-immigrants), of common ethnicity and religion with the illegal migrants to help them to overcome their problems. But it is not only the common people. It is also the organized Salafi and to a lesser extent Wahhabi networks in Europe. The new family members of the illegal migrants, are to claim for national and European citizenship, and they succeed. As far as, the hybrid weaponisation of the international law⁸ for the family reunification,⁹ is concerned, the final creation is an explosive mixture of hybrid threat for the European security. In other words, an open, humanitarian society as Europe, is condemned to be vulnerable to such threats that are of different nature and character with different philosophy, more sophisticated and massive than any conventional threat.

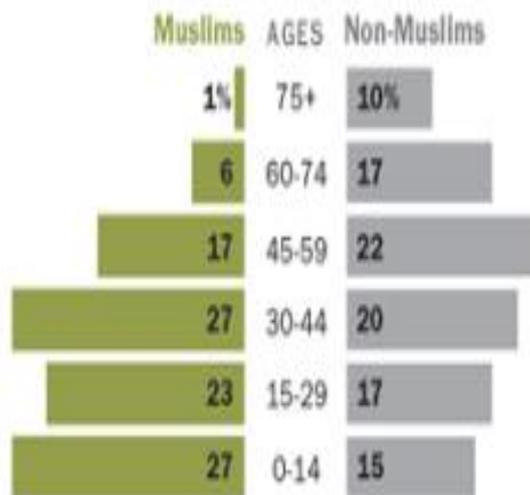
⁸ For the law as hybrid threat see, Sari, Aurel, *Hybrid threats and the law: Concepts, threats and implications*, *Hybrid CoE Trend Report 3, Research and Analyses*, The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, pp. 14-17, April 2020, Helsinki.

⁹ From the EU policies on Migration and Home Affairs: *"For the past 20 years, family reunification has been one of the main reasons for immigration into the EU. It is an entry channel enabling those who already reside legally in a Member State (referred to as sponsors) to be joined by their family members. Family reunification helps to create socio-cultural stability, facilitating the integration of third-country nationals residing in EU Member States, thus promoting economic and social cohesion—a fundamental EU objective"*.

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/family-reunification_en

Muslims in Europe are much younger than non-Muslims

Age distribution, 2016



Note: Europe is defined here as the 28 nations of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates. See Methodology for details.

"Europe's Growing Muslim Population"

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Muslims are younger than non-Muslims

Median age, 2016

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Age difference
Europe average	30	44	-13
France	27	43	-16
Germany	31	47	-16
Belgium	29	43	-14
Italy	33	47	-14
United Kingdom	28	41	-13
Denmark	30	43	-13
Finland	30	43	-13
Switzerland	30	44	-13
Austria	30	45	-15
Malta	30	42	-13
Norway	29	40	-11
Hungary	29	42	-12
Sweden	31	42	-12
Netherlands	33	44	-11
Spain	33	44	-11
Portugal	34	44	-10
Czech Republic	32	42	-10
Ireland	30	37	-7
Slovakia	32	39	-7
Poland	33	40	-7
Bulgaria	39	44	-5
Estonia	37	42	-5
Romania	38	42	-4
Slovenia	39	44	-4
Greece	40	44	-5
Luxembourg	35	40	-5
Croatia	40	43	-3
Latvia	41	43	-3
Cyprus	36	37	0
Lithuania	43	43	0

Note: Europe is defined here as the 28 nations of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland. Differences computed based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations. See Methodology for details.

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In medium-scale

In medium and shorter-scale level, there is a common practice, of international actors, such as certain sovereign states, to exploit this phenomenon, as diplomatic weapon, even a hybrid weapon against either states or supra-national entities and their orderly functioning. For example, Turkey is constantly demanding additional EU funds to keep illegal migrants from Asia as well as legitimate refugees from the Middle East, in its territory and not to move them into the EU's territory,¹⁰ *inter alia*, through the illegal

¹⁰ Stevis-Gridneff, Matina Kingsley, Patrick, "Turkey, "Pressing E.U. for Help in Syria, Threatens to Open Borders to Refugees", *The New York Times*, 28 February 2020, Brussels. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/28/world/europe/turkey-refugees-Geece-erdogan.html>, Also, in Champion, Marc, Ant, Onur, and Donaldson, Kitty, "Erdogan May Seek EU Money Even as He Trades Insults With Macron", *Bloomberg*, 29 November 2019, New York.

'traders of hope' channels.¹¹ It worth noting that according to The Guardian: "After intense bombardment in Idlib province last month, Turkey's president, Recep Tagip Erdogan, encouraged thousands of refugees in the country to move on towards the Greek islands and the Baltics, in a repeat of the surge to Europe in 2015. That push ended when the EU gave Turkey €6bn to house the refugees in Turkey. Nearly €4.7bn has been contractually awarded, but only about €3.2bn paid out. In a phone call on Tuesday between the French president, Emmanuel Macron, the British prime minister, Boris Johnson, the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and Erdoğan, the leaders discussed the possibility of a new refugee deal, ways to combat the continued Russian threat in Idlib, and the fear that coronavirus could sweep through the refugee camps bordering Syria in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan".¹² Moreover, according to the same article, "Erdoğan has been accused of blackmail by some Europeans for bussing refugees towards the EU's borders".¹³

Reasonable questions that arise for the geostrategists include:

- What is the role of refugees (with the status of asylum seeker) and immigrants in the countries of their transit and those of their temporary stay, where in many cases remain for a number of years due to restricted entry in other countries (closed borders) of transit or final destination?
- What is role of the illegal immigrants and refugees (with the status of asylum seeker) in their new countries of final destination?
- Which is the handling of the phenomenon of hiding fundamentalist islamist terrorists amongst the masses of illegal migrants and refugees (with the status of asylum seeker), who temporarily reside in either country of their first arrival, or of their transit countries?
- After Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have spent a trillion dollars to 'liberate' Syria just as they 'liberated' Libya, why they do not accept the Pakistani and Afghan 'refugees', in their state, but provide them with false passports of Syrian citizenship in order to enter Europe,¹⁴ aiming northern Europe;

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/erdogan-to-ask-europe-s-big-three-for-money-amid-refugee-threat>

¹¹ Hope, Kerin, "Greece hardens line on migrants as new flows heighten tension", *Financial Times*, 06 March 2020, London. <https://www.ft.com/content/801f4bd4-5ef5-11ea-b0ab-339c2307bcd4>

¹² Windour, Patrick, Smith, Helena, "Erdoğan in talks with European leaders over refugee cash for Turkey", *The Guardian*, 17 March 2020, Athens/London. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/17/erdogan-in-talks-with-european-leaders-over-refugee-cash-for-turkey>

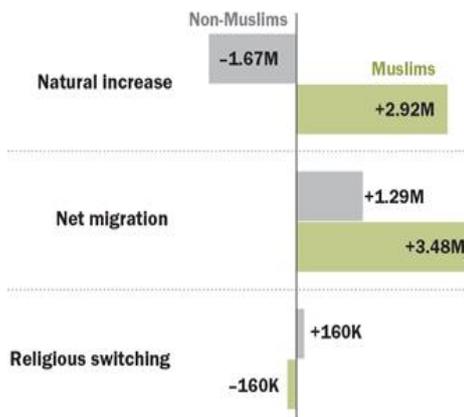
¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Olympia.gr, "Why don't the 'refugees' go to the wealthy and homodox countries that wanted to 'liberate' them?", *Olympia.gr*, 08 November 2015, <https://olympia.gr/2015/11/08/μα-γιατι-δεν-πανε-οι-προσφυγες-στις-παμ/>. Also, Millière, Guy, "Muslim Invasion of Europe", *Gatestone Institute, International Policy Council*, 22 October 2015, New York. <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6721/muslim-invasion-europe>

- With the fertility rate¹⁵ and the increase in the population of the presumed Muslim populations of migrants and refugees (with the status of asylum seeker), it is mathematically certain that there will be a reversal of the percentage of Europeans and neo-Europeans in the EU. Asian and Africans Muslim Europeans, will, easily, become a majority, before the end of the 21st century.¹⁶

Fertility and migration drove Muslim population growth in Europe between 2010 and 2016

Estimated population change between 2010 and 2016 due to three factors



Note: Natural increase is the difference between births and deaths. Net migration includes refugees and other regular migrants. Estimates do not include those asylum seekers who are not expected to gain legal status to remain in Europe. Europe defined here as the 28 member nations of the European Union in 2016 plus Norway and Switzerland. Source: Pew Research Center estimates. See Methodology for details. "Europe's Growing Muslim Population"

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In Europe, Muslims projected to have more children than non-Muslims

Total fertility rates, 2015-2020

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Difference
Europe average	2.6	1.6	+1.0
Finland	3.1	1.7	+1.4
United Kingdom	2.9	1.8	+1.0
France	2.9	1.9	+1.0
Sweden	2.8	1.8	+0.9
Belgium	2.6	1.7	+0.9
Denmark	2.5	1.7	+0.8
Netherlands	2.3	1.7	+0.5
Austria	2.2	1.5	+0.7
Norway	2.1	1.8	+0.3
Switzerland	2.1	1.5	+0.6
Germany	1.9	1.4	+0.5
Ireland	1.8	2.0	-0.2
Slovenia	1.7	1.6	+0.1
Bulgaria	1.6	1.6	+0.1
Romania	1.6	1.5	+0.1
Greece	1.5	1.3	+0.2

Note: The total fertility rate (TFR) is an estimate of the number of children an average woman is expected to have in her lifetime based upon age-specific fertility patterns observed in a given period. Europe is defined here as the 28 nations of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland. Countries lacking sufficient data are not shown. Differences between Muslims and non-Muslims are computed based on unrounded numbers. Source: Pew Research Center calculations. See Methodology for details. "Europe's Growing Muslim Population"

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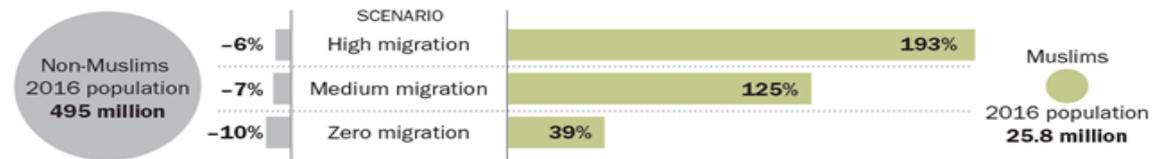
- To what extent does this objective prediction also entail the decline of the traditional humanitarian principles of the European culture and of the practices of the free spirit and thought expression that are the fundamental pylons of European civilization? Who benefits and who is in a position to use this hybrid super weapon?

¹⁵ Research Team of Pew Research Center, "Europe's Growing Muslim Population. Muslims are projected to increase as a share of Europe's population-even with no future migration", Part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, Pew Research Center, Nov. 2017, Washington, p.12; <https://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/>

¹⁶ Ibid., p.7.

In three migration scenarios, population decline for Europe's non-Muslims, population growth for Muslims

Projected percentage change in Europe's Muslim and non-Muslim population size, 2016-2050



Count estimates and projections

IN MILLIONS	2010	2016	2050 zero migration	2050 medium migration	2050 high migration
Muslims	19.5M	25.8M	35.8M	57.9M	75.6M
Non-Muslims	495.3M	495.1M	445.9M	459.1M	463.0M
Total	514.8M	520.8M	481.7M	516.9M	538.6M

Note: In high migration scenario, 2014 to mid-2016 refugee inflow patterns continue in addition to regular migration. In medium migration scenario, regular migration continues and refugee flows cease. In zero migration scenario, no migration of any kind takes place to or from Europe. Europe defined here as the 28 member nations of the European Union in 2016 plus Norway and Switzerland. Estimates do not include those asylum seekers who are not expected to gain legal status to remain in Europe.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates and projections. See Methodology for details.
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- To what extent is the hybrid weapon of moving large masses of populations, with common cultural factor that of Sunni Islam, from the east and the south towards Europe, in a position to inevitably affect and jeopardize European security on all levels? And with what ways? Are there any proper countermeasures to narrow the enormous range of vulnerability?

Effects of migration on European population

Projected population counts by 2050

	2010	2016	2050 zero migration	2050 medium migration	2050 high migration
Muslims	19,520,000	25,770,000	35,770,000	57,880,000	75,550,000
Non-Muslims	495,280,000	495,060,000	445,920,000	459,070,000	463,040,000
Total	514,810,000	520,830,000	481,690,000	516,950,000	538,600,000

Note: Europe is defined here as the 28 nations of the EU plus Norway and Switzerland. In zero migration scenario, no migration of any kind takes place to or from Europe. In medium migration scenario, regular migration continues and refugee flows cease. In high migration scenario, 2014 to mid-2016 refugee inflow patterns continue in addition to regular migration. Estimates do not include those asylum seekers who are not expected to gain legal status to remain in Europe.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates and projections. See Methodology for details.
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A new European President with old European tricks

It is extremely important for Europe, in the sense that something started to move at last in the highest rank of the 'EU directorate' in the migration issue that among the first statements of the new President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, on 19 July 2019, was a statement oriented towards the more proportional distribution of migrants within the European Union: "I've never really understood why Dublin started with the

simple equation: Where a migrant first stepped foot in the EU, that's where he or she must stay".¹⁷ In addition, she made clear, for the first time European Union's volition to actively support is more impacted member states: "We can only have stability on our external borders if we provide sufficient help to member states that are exposed to a lot of migration pressure because of their position on the map".¹⁸

This was held true on 3 March 2010, when the President of the European Commission visited, along with the Greek Prime Minister and a high-ranking¹⁹ task force of the EU, the Greek/Turkish borders in the area of Evros River, where the organized attempt of thousands of migrants and refugees to illegally enter Greek/European Territory took place. More specifically, according to Deutsche Welle: "European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has promised Greece 700 million euros and extra border guards to handle a new wave of migration. This comes as thousands of people are trying to cross the border from neighboring Turkey".²⁰ Moreover, EU dispatched either as supra-national political entity, either their members as sovereign states²¹ funds,²² special armored vehicles²³ και special units of law enforcement²⁴ in order to reinforce the efforts of their

¹⁷ Deutsche Welle News, "Von der Leyen outlines position on migration, other EU challenges", Deutsche Welle, 19 July 2019, Berlin. <https://www.dw.com/en/von-der-leyen-outlines-position-on-migration-other-eu-challenges/a-49643733>, cw/cmck (AFP, dpa).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The high-ranking task force included, apart from the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and of the European Parliament David Sassoli. In addition, Margaritis Schinas, Vice President of the Commission and Commissioner of Promoting our European Way of Life, the Prime Minister of Croatia, Andrej Plenković and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs of Croatia, Davor Božinović, were also present.

²⁰ Deutsche Welle News, "EU vows to help Greece as migrant crisis deepens", Deutsche Welle, 03 March 2020, Berlin. <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-vows-to-help-greece-as-migrant-crisis-deepens/av-52629178>

²¹ Helsinki sent the 5th Finnish Border Guard Special Intervention Unit, in assistance of the Greek Border Guards. Vlassis, Savvas, "The Special European Joint Operations Team in Kastanies, Evros", The national pride, 29 March 2020, Athens.

²² Tsatsaroni, Androniki, "Are the 700 million that Europe gives to Greece for the immigration crisis, plenty or not?", Sputnik News, 05-03-2020, Athens. <https://sptnkne.ws/B95F>

²³ Austria dispatched the modern and massive armoured vehicle "Prince Eugene", named after Prince Eugene of Savoy, who in the 17th century due to his victories against the Ottomans threat was also known as the "Destroyer of Ottomans". Vlassis, Savvas, "How the Austrian Cobra "bite" the Turk". Dorian Horse, 19-03-2020, Athens, <https://doureios.com/pos-dagose-o-austriakos-cobra-ton-toyrkako/>

²⁴ Austria dispatched a 13-man team of the Police Force Special Unit Einsatzkommando Cobra to Evros River, where it assisted the corresponding Greek forces of EKAM from 9 March until 2 April, for the protection of the borders. The Austrian Minister of Internal Affairs, Karl Nehammer stated that: "[the dispatch of Austrian Special Forces] *is of historic dimension for the Austrian security policy... In Evros, we have not only protected the external borders of the European Union, but our borders as well. An open Europe internally can only function with the effective protection of the external borders*". Athenian Agency

Greek counterparts in the Greek-Turkish borders in Evros river. The further reinforced of the European Unit of FRONTEX was also proposed, demonstrating for the first time the political will to confront the phenomenon at Europe's gates. Nevertheless, the latest developments revealed that the said amount will not be used to strengthen the 'defense' of the Greek/European borders, in order to deal with the illegal mass migration. On the contrary, it corresponds to funds that will be included in the budget of programmes Hestia and Helios, that are already in progress and relate to the improvement of the living conditions of the illegal migrants and refugees (with the status of asylum seeker), in Greece, with the cooperation and supervision of the United Nations High Commission and the International Organization for Migration.²⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, it becomes apparent that the EU has demonstrated a prolonged political immaturity and shortsightedness, at best, without regard for its physical and cultural survival, *via* a suicidal *crescendo* of choices with "humanitarian" *façade* and questionable nature. In no way, can, the support and preservation of the volatile economic growth, balance the undermining of the future of Europe, the historic engine of the modern global scientific and cultural achievements of human life.

News, "Austria: Of historic dimension [is] the support that gave in the Greek borders", 04-04-2020, *On Alert*, Athens.

<https://www.onalert.gr/kosmos/aystria-istorikis-diastasis-i-voitheia-poy-prosferame-sta-ellinika-synora/381816/>

²⁵ The provisions of the programmes include financial allowances, improvement of residency infrastructure, free food and clothing, free electricity and water consuming, etc. to the illegal entrants, without even distinguishing the refugees from the illegal migrants. Nearchou Pericles, "EU funded Colonisation", *Freeopen.gr*, 29-04-2020, Athens.

http://www.freeopen.gr/2020/04/blog-post_441.html

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