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**WELCOMING THE UNWELCOMED: THE ROLE OF PORTUGAL IN
THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS**

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ABSTRACT

WELCOMING THE UNWELCOMED: THE ROLE OF PORTUGAL IN THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

BÁRBARA MATIAS

This thesis examines the role of Portugal as asylum destination among the twenty-eight European Union Member States, and why it has been plagued by high abandonment rates in the context of the ongoing refugee crisis. The European Union faces unprecedented numbers of incoming refugees which have strained arrival countries and overwhelmed popular destination countries. This paper explores how an unequal regional distribution of refugees developed in the EU and why Portugal has become a transit country hub for secondary movements.

Portugal presents an exceptional political willingness to take in more refugees and a civil society eagerness to welcome those in need of international protection. Yet this is matched with inexperienced an integration system and lack of refugee social networks vis-à-vis other EU Member States which hinders its exposure as preferred country for resettlement or relocation. The study looks to understand what factors into refugees' decision-making in order to contribute to the field in better understanding of the dynamics of EU asylum flows. I argue abandonment rates are high in Portugal because the country does not have international appeal as host country in comparison to other EU Member states. Both due to an inexperienced integration system and a weak refugee network of social connections, which are reciprocally influenced and prompt secondary movements.

This research seeks to ultimately showcase the strengths and weaknesses of the Portuguese reception and integration system in order to increase the appeal of Portugal as a well-established destination country.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPR: *Conselho Português para os Refugiados* (Portuguese Refugee Council)

EC: European Commission

ECFR: European Council on Foreign Relations

EP: European Parliament

EU: European Union

FRONTEX: European Border and Coast Guard Agency

IOM: International Organization for Migration

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PAR: *Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados* (Refugee Support Platform)

PALOP: *Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* (African Countries of Official Portuguese Language)

SEF: *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* (Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service)

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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INTRODUCTION

“We have a good welcome from people, more than other countries, but the organizations responsible for working with refugees in Portugal do not have enough experience or contact with the Middle East.” - Mohamad Abou Ras, 2017.¹

Forced displacement has become the imperative form of human mobility, as pronounced in the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. The handling of the crisis by the European Union (EU), the struggle of arrival countries and the appeal of destination countries has been the subject of countless studies on international obligations. Yet scholarly research lacks in analyzing the role of Portugal, a country that welcomes immigrants and refugees in law and society, but where refugees not only do not want to settle but also leave once granted asylum. The abandonment rates are high in Portugal because the country does not bear great international appeal as host country in comparison to other EU Member states. I argue this lies in Portugal having started accepting refugees through resettlement and relocation programs later. It resulted in weaker refugee networks and in an inexperienced integration system of disjointed social services. An efficient and harmonious integration of refugees is therefore made more difficult.

Portugal as a refugee host country may be a neglected academic topic but, rooted in the urgent EU context of distribution schemes and contrasting host Member States, it matters. My thesis explores the research question *Why are refugees dismissing Portugal as a destination country for asylum in the European Union?* While popular countries such as Germany and Sweden have received, respectively, 55.05 per cent and 12.2 per cent of all asylum applications in the EU between April 2011 and July 2017, Portugal only received

¹ Mohamad Abou Ras, Syrian refugee in Portugal, email to the author, 19 September, 2017.

0.09 per cent of requests.² Additionally, 42 per cent of refugees settled in Portugal under the EU Relocation Mechanism abandon the country.³ In consideration of the broader EU context and Portugal's political and civil society openness to refugees, the abandonment rate is puzzling. This research can better inform the relevant Portuguese authorities and EU institutions, as well as flag this growing issue in the Portuguese agenda.

I will firstly present a Literature Review and my research methods. Chapter 1 provides quantitative and qualitative data to analyze how EU institutions and Member States have managed the unparalleled inflows, which provides insight into Portugal vis-à-vis its neighbors. Chapter 2 focuses on Portugal as an actor in EU refugee schemes, and how its immigration history, national laws, and government solidarity have determined its standing as host country. Chapter 3 dissects my argument in examining the Portuguese integration system and how its structures may facilitate abandonments. My research also addresses refugees living in Portugal and in Germany to understand the perspective of those directly impacted by reception and integration policies, and how familial aspects critically factor into refugees' decision to leave Portugal. Lastly, I present policy recommendations for reforming the Portuguese integration system and governmental action in order to achieve the desired outcome of improving retention rates and Portugal's reputation as asylum destination in the EU. This thesis examines how Portugal has attended to the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees, and how policies can be improved to assure better integration.

² UNHCR, "Europe: Syrian Asylum Application," <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php> (accessed 12 October 2017).

³ "Dois em cada cinco refugiados recolocados por Portugal abandonam o país," [Two in every five Relocated Refugees in Portugal leave the country], TSF, May 9 2017, <http://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/interior/dois-em-cada-cinco-refugiados-recolocados-por-portugal-abandonam-o-pais-7995135.html> (accessed May 15 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODOLOGY

Scholars have analyzed the European Union's inability to respond to the crisis, as the inflows develop into an unequal distribution of refugees among Member States. The literature focuses on empirical research over conceptual themes, yet nonetheless provides insight for my research in interpreting the unequal distribution of refugees. Member States tend to resist institutional efforts to standardize the allocation of refugees. Some show preference in taking in refugees from particular countries of origin based on foreign communities already present in the country.⁴ In this line, Susi Dennison & Josef Janning argue that "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."⁵

Integration of forced migrants into host countries and how networks facilitate migration is a big theme. Aiwha Ong's *Buddha Is Hiding* looks into Cambodian refugees arriving to the United States in the 1970s. Their interactions with the host community dictate their integration and new identity, Ong arguing that "As physicians attended to the health of their bodies, refugees were taught new social needs, norms and practices that were expected of immigrants bound for the modern West."⁶ Liisa Malkki also explores how displacement leads to a new identity of the resettled refugee: she argues that town refugees aim for invisibility in relation to authority or services in ordinary daily life, "because all were perceived as points of potential bureaucratic entanglement, places where the refugees

⁴ Delphine Perrin and Frank McNamara, "Refugee Resettlement in the EU: Between Shared Standards and Diversity in Legal and Policy Frames," KNOW RESET Research Report (March 2013), pg.35.

⁵ Susi Dennison and Josef Janning, *Bear Any Burden: How EU Governments Can Manage The Refugee Crisis*, European Council On Foreign Relations, ECFR/167 (April 2016), pg.5.

⁶ Aiwha Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003), pg.60.

might be swept along in processes beyond their control.”⁷ Both authors research integration of refugees over the long term but do not shed light on the phenomena of refugees choosing not to integrate in their country of asylum.

Transnational social networks also play an important role in integration and in communicating prime asylum destinations. Jeff Crisp argues that refugee networks should be considered as a mobilizing force that facilitates financial burdens of those fleeing. Crisp gives the example of the Sri Lankan Tamils who sought asylum in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, incited by “emigration of Tamil professionals, workers and students in the 1970s (...) which provided the social infrastructure required to arrange the departure of asylum-seekers.”⁸ More than a result of legislation, the distribution of asylum-seekers is led by commonality and cultural or historical ties between countries of origin and destination. Thielemann observes colonial links, language ties and cultural networks, which often lead to transport, trade and communication links between countries.⁹ Thielemann also comments on reputation, another important theme into what constitutes a host country, for it connects the destination country to the country of origin.¹⁰ The international appeal a country enjoys directly impacts its migration and irregular migration flows. Even so, to date there are few analyses on how these factors affect a host country, especially in the context of the present crisis.

⁷ Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and exile: violence, memory, and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pg.155.

⁸ *Ibid*, pg.7.

⁹ Eiko R Thielemann, "Why Asylum Policy Harmonization Undermines Refugee Burden-Sharing," Vol. 6 Issue 1, *European Journal of Migration and Law*, (2004), pg.63.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pg.63.

Scholars have overall not focused on Portugal, but key themes still emerge: the inexperience of the integration system, the solidarity approach and the benefits from inflows. Paulo Reis Mourão explains that the lack of academic work may be attributed to “Portuguese immigration having become statistically significant only over the last 10 years.”¹¹ Portugal is often hostage to what Hector Cebolla-Boado and Claudia Finotelli call the North–South divide in integration, where South European states tend for a more relaxed laissez-faire approach toward policy-making: “In contrast with the more elaborated views on integration in other countries.”¹² The nature of national policies impacts flows and distribution, but recent events such as EU accession and establishment of the Schengen Area have shifted trends. María Lucinda Fonseca and Jennifer McGarrigle argue that, besides the regular waves from former colonies, Portugal has become a destination for economic migrants arriving through both formal and informal networks from Eastern Europe and Asia.¹³ The shift from traditional influxes from Portuguese-speaking countries to new migratory waves from Eastern Europe led to a need for change in the typical policies and processes of Portuguese migration or inflows.

Another aspect of Portuguese integration is that the government and civil society maintain a positive outlook on foreigners in Portugal. The benefits they bring to economic growth and the demographic pyramid have been noted by Fonseca and McGarrigle .¹⁴ Paulo

¹¹ Paulo Reis Mourão, “Socio-economic Determinants for the Portuguese Immigration: An Empirical Discussion,” *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 125, Issue 3, pg. 955–975 (February 2016), pg.963.

¹² Hector Cebolla-Boado and Claudia Finotelli, “Is There a North–South Divide in Integration Outcomes? A Comparison of the Integration Outcomes of Immigrants in Southern and Northern Europe,” *European Journal of Population*, Vol.31, Issue 1, pp 77–102 (February 2015), pg.81.

¹³ María Lucinda Fonseca and Jennifer McGarrigle, “Immigration and policy: new challenges after the economic crisis in Portugal,” *Research Gate* (March 2014), pg.51.

¹⁴ María Lucinda Fonseca and Jennifer McGarrigle, “Immigration and policy: new challenges after the economic crisis in Portugal,” pg.69.

Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soares argue the same, for “While some EU members have erected fences, Lisbon has made a stand for solidarity on refugees. It’s been driven by political as well as economic strategy.”¹⁵ This narrative has made for increased social and political awareness of the benefits of integrating foreigners.

Scholars have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Portuguese refugee integration system. Nuno Ferreira argues the Portuguese socio-legal framework is more generous than others in Europe in light of the low number of asylum-seekers that reach its borders looking for asylum or to integrate. He observes that “All asylum-seekers are initially housed in the official accommodation center, located in the greater Lisbon area.”¹⁶ José Brito-Soares, in contrast, argues that this housing system may prevent refugees from properly integrating with the community: “this lack of visibility places them at the margins of both the political and social system, and the health system itself, even if according to Portuguese law they enjoy full access to it.”¹⁷ The refugee housing situation in Portugal are contested by national players, and I argue is one of the factors that take part in an admitted refugee’s decision to leave Portugal. Informed by the literature, there is a serious gap when analyzing the refugee flows and integration themes within the European refugee crisis: the role of Portugal as a host Member State.

¹⁵ Paulo Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soares, “Portugal’s Openness to Refugees Makes Demographic and Economic Sense,” News Deeply, 10 February 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/02/10/portugals-openness-to-refugees-makes-demographic-and-economic-sense> (accessed 15 August 2017).

¹⁶ Nuno Ferreira, “Portuguese Refugee Law in the European Context: The Case of Sexuality-Based Claims,” *International Journal Refugee Law*, Vol.27 Issue 3 (2015), pg.11.

¹⁷ José Brito-Soares, “Situations d’asile, de transit, d’accueil des réfugiés au Portugal,” *Vie sociale et traitements*, No.120, (April 2013), pg.41.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

My thesis seeks to expand on this gap with the following research question through a human rights lens: *Why are refugees dismissing Portugal as a destination country for asylum in the European Union?*

The target population are the refugees in Portugal in relation to the governmental institutions and solidarity mechanisms which welcome them. Geographically, I consider the country of Portugal, and temporally from 2014 until the present time, while considering past colonial immigration and refugee integration trends. My research examines how refugees integrate in Portugal and which factors figure into the decision-making of asylum-seekers and refugees. There are enough questions on this topic to warrant research for a substantiated answer.

This thesis argues that, despite the Portuguese refugee integration system being compliant with international and European law, there is a gap between the formal offer and the practical demand. Refugees reaching Europe aim for countries with already-established refugee communities and experienced integration systems. I argue that refugees are rejecting Portugal as a result of the country not having the international recognition as host other EU Members enjoy. This happens because its integration policies are new and recently implemented, for Portugal implemented reception efforts later which resulted in weaker refugee networks and lesser visibility to asylum-seekers. Integration efforts must therefore be sustained and developed in the long term in order to change this narrative and, in that way, improve retention rates.

RESEARCH METHODS

I have two dimensions based off the literature review: a legal one rooted in EU law and Portuguese refugee law, and a social one rooted in practical outcomes of the norms. I draw on a methodology that accounts for both.

Primary sources are considered to better explain how refugees stand in Portuguese Constitutional and Ordinary Law, and how it fits into EU directives. By identifying the legal norms and international obligations, the relevant actors and human rights problems at stake are identified. Secondly, archival research built on secondary sources on Portuguese immigration, refugee and asylum history, along with institutional reports to collect quantifiable data on refugee flows and asylum applications. This data provides a historically-sensitive take on the research question and hypothesis.

Regarding the social dimension, semi-structured voluntary interviews steered by my research question.¹⁸ I spent two months in Greece and Portugal conducting field research, ethnography and interviews. Three weeks were spent at the Skaramangas refugee camp in Athens, where I observed camp life and interviewed a volunteer worker leading pre-relocation efforts, a UNHCR representative and refugees. Five weeks were spent in Lisbon, where I collected information from primary sources and conducted interviews which led to the recruitment of more participants through snowball sampling. Further interviews were conducted by Skype and email with participants living in Europe when I was living in New York. I interviewed representatives from a large range of sectors: government, refugee organizations, civil society, academics, journalists, and refugees themselves, both living in Portugal and having left Portugal. This permitted an all-encompassing approach to the

¹⁸ A comprehensive List of Interviews Conducted can be found in Annex A.

research question – understanding how refugee allocation is done, which safeguards Portuguese law grants, what role each sector has and, chiefly, how refugees in Portugal perceive the integration system in comparison to other EU Member States.

1 | THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK BEHIND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

“The refugee crisis that has confronted Europe has posed a major challenge to European structures. The Schengen Agreement, allowing free movement across borders, has been tested almost to destruction, as border controls are reinstated.” - Bayard Roberts, Adrianna Murphy, Martin McKee, 2016.¹⁹

The enduring refugee crisis in Europe has strained European Union (EU) common policies and stirred political divides. Portugal is a Member State bound by EU laws. My research, which addresses why refugees are abandoning this asylum country, also considers the broader framework in which the country designs its asylum and reception policies. Asylum-seekers reach the EU with certain expectations that aren't necessarily met by the distributive schemes, which prompts secondary movements – asylum-seekers moving in an irregular manner from countries where they have already found protection - within the Union.

This chapter examines how burden-sharing schemes have handled the massive inflows of refugees among the EU28. The core values, the regional distribution divides, the solidarity pledges and the weighed factors in relocation all amount to the role Portugal has not only been assigned as receiving country, but also unsuspectingly grown into.

EUROPEAN POLITICAL VALUES & LAW

There are 65.3 million forcibly displaced people in the world today. These are unprecedented numbers, the largest population movement ever in Europe, a “historic

¹⁹ Bayard Roberts, Adrianna Murphy and Martin McKee, “Europe’s collective failure to address the refugee crisis,” *Public Health Reviews* Vol.37 Issue 1 (2016), <https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-016-0015-6> (accessed 28 August 2017).

phenomenon which triggered a serious threat about the existence of the Union and its principles.”²⁰ In 2016, 1,259,970 persons applied for asylum in the EU28²¹. In that same year, 1,106,405 first instance asylum decisions were made, an increase from 2015’s 592,680 figure.²² FRONTEX, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, reports that in the first six months of 2017, 125,547 illegal crossings were detected.²³ Lastly, the EU28 resettled 14,205 refugees through national or community resettlement scheme, 6,050 more than in the previous year.²⁴

The pressure these inflows could produce on infrastructure and services has triggered political tensions. A March 2017 *New York Times* article showed how right-wing parties have made political gains: for example, Austria’s Freedom Party won 35.1 per cent of the votes in 2016, compared to 20.3 per cent in 2013; Portugal and Spain are the only exceptions in not even having nationalist movements. The Centre for European Policy Studies argues “there has never been a time when the need for a common European response to refugee arrivals has been more urgent. That response is needed to meet the EU’s collective obligations in international law, as reaffirmed in the EU legal order.”²⁵ The EU has struggled to reconcile these values with capable policies which provide urgent relief and satisfy refugee rights amidst the massive influx from land and sea.

²⁰ Amelie F. Constant and Klaus F. Zimmermann, “Towards a new European refugee policy that works,” *Working Paper Series* #2016-062, Princeton University and UNU-MERIT (October 2016), pg.2.

²¹ “A Welcoming Europe? – 2010-2016 infographic,” EUROSTAT, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/external/html/welcomingeurope/default_en.htm (accessed 18 August 2017).

²² “First instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex Annual aggregated data,” EUROSTAT, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asydcfsta&lang=en (accessed 17 August 2017).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “Resettled persons - annual data,” EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00195&plugin=1> (accessed 17 August 2017).

²⁵ Elspeth Guild, Cathryn Costello, Madeline Garlick and Violeta Moreno-Lax, *The 2015 Refugee Crisis in the European Union – Policy Brief*, Centre for European Policy Studies, No.332 (September 2015), pg.2.

The EU-Turkey deal on collective expulsions as a measure to stop irregular migration to Greece, in effect since March 2016, was labelled “a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order,”²⁶ but has failed to protect asylum-seekers. The Dublin Regulation also established a system of managing applications in determining a “Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person,” yet also failed to assure protection.²⁷ The European Refugee Fund (2008-2013)²⁸ was not able to cover the disproportionate influx among States receiving refugees and, currently in place for 2014-2020, is the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, estimated at €3.1 billion.²⁹ The EU has even improved external cooperation between countries of origin, transit, and destination by setting up a €1.8 billion³⁰ Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, in November 2015, to address the root causes of irregular migration and forcible displacement, as well as backing a €44 billion in private investments in African states, in July 2017.³¹ This broader perspective is important for my research on secondary movements in the EU28 for it shows how the EU has tried, but not been able to firmly enact an efficient response to inflows, which prompts abandonments and transit countries.

²⁶ EU Council, “EU-Turkey statement – press release,” 18 March 2016, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/> (accessed 1 May 2017).

²⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, *REGULATION (EU) No 604/2013*, 26 June 2013, Article 1, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0604&from=EN> (accessed 1 May 2017).

²⁸ European Commission, “Migration and Home Affairs: Refugee Fund,” 20 June 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/refugee-fund/index_en.htm (accessed 1 May 2017).

²⁹ European Commission, “Asylum, Migration, Integration,” https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders_en (accessed 17 October 2017).

³⁰ Council of the European Union, “Valetta Summit on migration,” 12 November 2015, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/11/11-12/> (accessed 1 May 2017).

³¹ European Parliament, “EU investment plan on track to tackle root causes of migration,” 6 July 2017, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170629IPR78662/eu-investment-plan-on-track-to-tackle-root-causes-of-migration> (accessed 15 August 2017).

THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEES AMONG MEMBER STATES

The EU's agenda has been to reduce incentives for smuggling networks, secure external borders and sharpen a common asylum policy. Yet a main problem remains: an uneven distribution of refugees amongst the 28 Member States, where Portugal's standing is weak compared to popular destination countries which report large inflows of irregular migrants.

Latest UNHCR data shows that Germany is the top final destination for asylum in Europe – it accounts for 51.6 per cent of the 884 461 asylum applications filed in European countries between April 2011 and October 2016.³² Portugal, in comparison, received 851 asylum applications. Luc Bovens and Günperi Sisman argue there is “a ‘low responsibility bloc’ incorporating Portugal, Spain and the Eastern European states. These countries contain 32 per cent of the EU's population, but register only 5 per cent of applications.”³³ It means certain countries' social, health and education systems are strained in an inequitable way given the absence of a harmonized EU scheme.

³² UNHCR, “EUROPE - Syrian Asylum Applications,” <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php> (accessed 12 October 2017).

³³ Luc Bovens and Günperi Sisman, “*Greece, Portugal, Spain and the East European states take on less than their fair share of responsibility for EU asylum seekers*,” LSE European Politics and Policy (EUROPP) Blog (29 April 2013), pg.1.

As displayed in the Chart 1, of the 922,406 asylum applications reported by the UNHCR, Portugal is the only Western member to not display a figure above 1,000. Neighbor Spain reports 12,127 applications, for instance, and the burden Germany bears is clearly illustrated, much like other popular Northern countries. Hungary also shows high rates despite not implementing EU-mandated quotas, due to its geographical position which renders it vulnerable to inflows. In contrast, the Baltic countries and countries which have openly

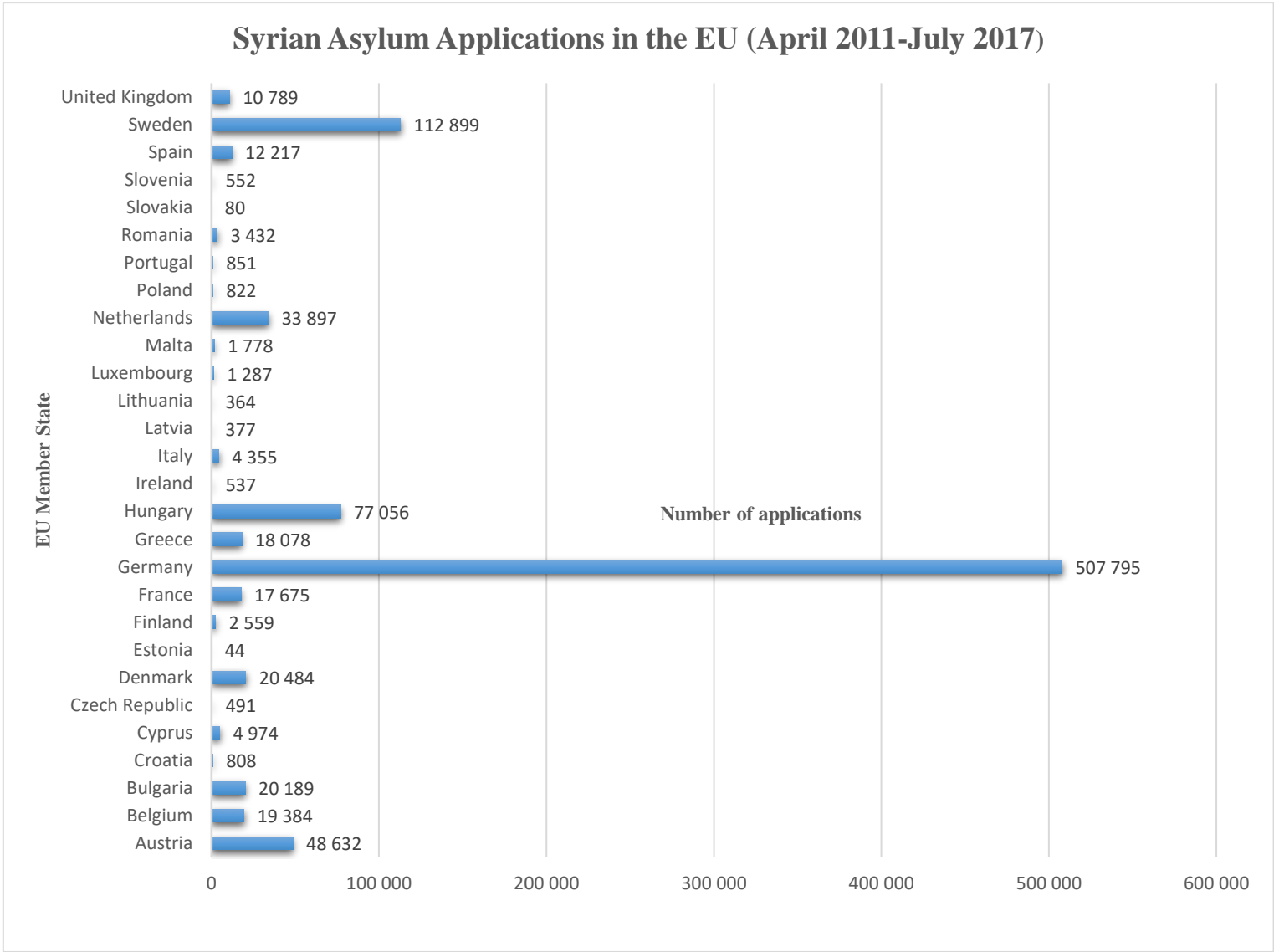


Chart 1: Number of Syrian asylum application in EU Member States between April 2011 and July 2017 (source: UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>, accessed 12 October 2017)

resisted relocating refugees report extremely low numbers. Indeed there is an unequal distribution of refugees: Southern European countries are seen as gateways to the EU, such as Greece and Italy, or as transit countries within the Schengen Area, as in the example of Portugal, while Northern European countries appear as the ideal destinations for asylum. This phenomenon has been facilitated by the Schengen Area of free movement, which determines that “internal borders may be crossed at any point without a border check on persons, irrespective of their nationality.”³⁴ Secondary movements are therefore made easy. In light of the surge in irregular migration, Member States have adopted a more security approach, reinstating internal borders to assure orderly refugee registration and manage secondary movements, such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, France and Hungary’s razor-wire fence.

In an attempt to balance the distribution of refugees, in September 2015 the EU launched a two-year temporary emergency relocation plan of a total of 160,000 asylum-seekers in Italy and Greece. The legal obligations to this scheme will remain until all persons arriving in Greece or Italy until 26 September 2017 and eligible applicants are relocated within a reasonable timeframe.³⁵ Asylum-seekers are allocated to a Member State in a coordinated way that appeases their rights and the reception capabilities of countries: “The relocation would be done according to a mandatory distribution key using objective and

³⁴ Official Journal of the European Union, *Schengen Borders Code* (15 March 2006), Article 20.

³⁵ European Commission, “Migration: Record month for relocations from Italy and Greece – press release,” 26 July 2017, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2104_en.htm (accessed 12 November 2017).



Image 1: Skaramangas Refugee Camp (Athens, Greece), June 2017. Author photograph.

quantifiable criteria (40 per cent of size of the population, 40 per cent of GDP, 10 per cent of average number of past asylum applications, 10 per cent of unemployment rate).³⁶ The EC document also determines that “to decide which should be the Member State of relocation, specific account should be given to the specific qualifications and characteristics of the applicants concerned, such as their language skills and other individual indications based on demonstrated family, cultural or social ties which could facilitate their integration.”³⁷ For example, Portugal would receive 388 refugees from Italy and

1254 refugees from Greece based on this criteria.³⁸ As of 27 September 2017, Portugal had relocated 299 refugees from Italy and 1,197 refugees from Greece.³⁹

The sustainability of a top-down Common European Asylum System has however been defied by some Member States not honoring their relocation commitments. The Thirteenth Report on Relocation and Resettlement stresses that Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic have not pledged to relocate refugees and criticizes Slovakia for its strict preferences and high rejection rates.⁴⁰ Spyridoula Mikalef of UNHCR-Athens explains that “some Member States express very specific preferences (specific nationalities, size of family,

³⁶ European Commission, “Refugee Crisis – Q&A on Emergency Relocation – factsheet,” 22 September 2015, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-15-5698_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-5698_en.htm) (accessed 1 May 2017).

³⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, *COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015*, Paragraph 34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ UNHCR, “EU Emergency Relocation Mechanism as of 27 September 2017,” 28 September 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/map/italy/eu-emergency-relocation-mechanism-27-september-2017> (accessed 12 November 2017).

⁴⁰ European Commission, *Thirteenth report on relocation and resettlement - COM(2017) 330 final* (13 June 2017).

no unaccompanied minors). For this reason the EC highlighted in its Progress Reports on the Relocation scheme that each country should comply with the principle of non-discrimination.”⁴¹ The refusal of certain Member States to abide by the scheme has plagued the pace of relocations. Yet as procedures become more operational and Members sustain pledging efforts, the relocation scheme has alleviated arrival countries: “since January almost 10,300 people had been relocated. This is more than a fivefold increase compared to the same period of 2016 with only 1,600 persons relocated.”⁴² Malta, for instance, has relocated its full allocation and Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Portugal are well on track to fulfil their obligations (see Chart 1).

The all-encompassing EU framework dictates the asylum quotas and legal responsibilities of Portugal, and similarly prompts unequal roles amidst the EU28. The following chapters examine the role Portugal has played: the strengths and weaknesses in how it upholds European solidarity obligations, and how this influences its reputation as host country to refugees.

⁴¹ Spyridoula Mikalef, Senior Protection Associate at BO Athens/UNHCR, email to the author, 28 June, 2017.

⁴² European Commission, *Thirteenth report on relocation and resettlement*, pg.2.

2 | THE ROLE OF PORTUGAL IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A HOST COUNTRY FOR REFUGEES

Within the European framework, I single out Portugal as a Member State in the frontline of European Union (EU) efforts. Secondary movements are common among the EU but particularly high in Portugal – research finds that two in five relocated refugees leave Portugal, which amounts to 555 individuals over 2015 and 2016.⁴³ My argument is that Portugal, open border policies notwithstanding, does not have a long-standing history of refugee intake which hinders the establishment of thorough integration policies and the appeal of the country as known destination.

This chapter addresses the history of Portugal as a host country to immigrants and refugees, the safeguards Portuguese asylum law grants, and how the government has welcomed those in need of international protection. It confirms Portugal has no experience with refugees or asylum-seekers compared to other European countries, which inhibits the country's appeal no matter how favorable the legal entitlements and governmental solidarity.

PAST IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE TRENDS IN PORTUGAL

*“In Portugal, both in the past and present, refugees are far from being able to enjoy the social recognition that is given to immigrants, in the context of Portuguese society, in part because of the derisory number in comparison to the latter.” - Cristina Santinho, 2013.*⁴⁴

⁴³ “Dois em cada cinco refugiados recolocados por Portugal abandonam o país,” [Two in every five Relocated Refugees in Portugal leave the country], TSF, May 9 2017, <http://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/interior/dois-em-cada-cinco-refugiados-recolocados-por-portugal-abandonam-o-pais-7995135.html> (accessed May 15 2017).

⁴⁴ Maria Cristina Santinho, “Afinal, que asilo é este que não nos protege?” [After all, what is this Asylum that does not protect us?], *Emográfica* Vol.17 Issue 1 (2013), pg.13.

A former colonial empire, Portugal is a small coastal country of 10,324,611 persons,⁴⁵ yet has always had high immigration rates from former colonies. The vast majority are economic migrants that look to the cultural commonality with Portugal as a means to readily integrate into the developed European system, given strong bilateral relations that permit fast prospects of citizenship. Immigrants come mainly from its former African colonies – Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau – and Brazil. Another significant portion comes from Asia, where the Portuguese colonial empire extended to East Timor, Macau, and India. Since the Schengen Area facilitated migratory flows of Eastern Europeans, the European immigrant community in Portugal has also grown significantly.

The first modern period to analyze the foreign population with legal resident status in Portugal is the 1980s, when sufficient years had passed since the migratory flows prompted by the end of the authoritarian rule (1974), and the independence of Angola (1974) and Mozambique (1975).⁴⁶ At the start of the 1980s, 48.8 per cent of immigrants came from Africa, all 24,788 persons from former colonies, 15,380 persons (30.3 per cent) were European, 9,405 persons (18.5 per cent) were from the Americas, of which more than half were from Brazil, and 911 persons (1.7 per cent) were from Asia. By 2010, Portugal had 443,055 immigrants with legal resident status living and the impact of Schengen could already be felt: 39.9 per cent from Europe (the first time the European figure surpassed the African one), 28.9 per cent from the Americas (of which 93.2 per cent were Brazilian), 24.2

⁴⁵ “Portugal,” World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/portugal> (accessed 18 September 2017).

⁴⁶ “Foreign population with legal resident status in Portugal by nationality – 1960-2016,” PORDATA, <https://www.pordata.pt/DB/Portugal/Ambiente+de+Consulta/Tabela> (accessed 16 September 2017).

per cent from the Africa and 7 per cent from Asia. Chart 2 presents an illustration of key figures.

In 2015, the National Statistics Institute of Portugal (INE) revealed a foreign population with legal resident status of 383,759 persons: 40 per cent came from Europe (of which 67.9 per cent were from the EU), 24.4 per cent from Africa (of which 91.3 per cent were from the PALOP, the interstate organization comprising all Portuguese-speaking African countries), 23.4 per cent from the Americas (of which 87.7 per cent were from

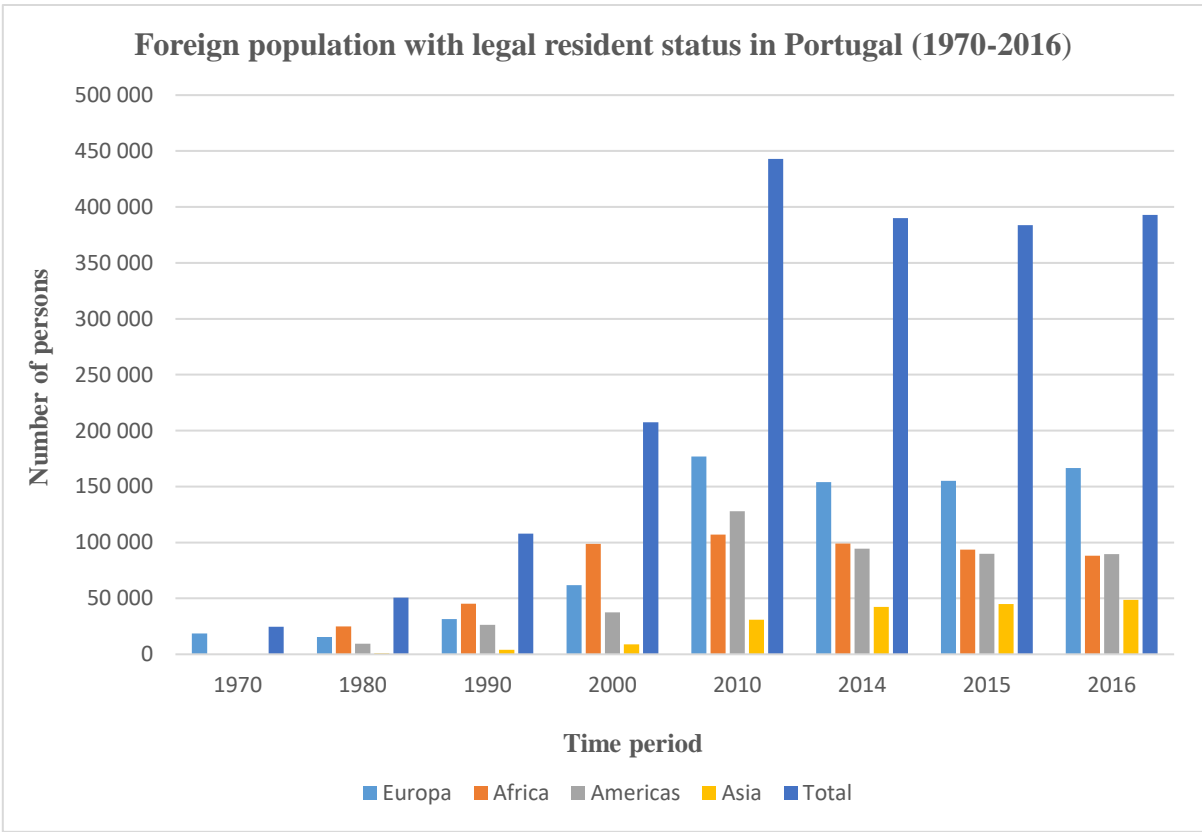


Chart 2: Number of foreign population with legal resident status living in Portugal between 1970 and 2016 (source: PORDATA)

Brazil), 11.7 per cent from Asia (of which 36.2 per cent were from East Timor and India combined) and, finally, 0.08 per cent from Oceania, a region with no attachment to the

Portuguese colonial empire.⁴⁷ Therefore, incoming economic migrants commonly share the same language and religion as the host country, which enables a smoother labor market integration and communal living. “The use of Portuguese as the mother tongue and prior Portuguese immigration are the main determinants of current immigration to Portugal from a given country,”⁴⁸ argues Paulo Reis Mourão.

When it comes to incoming refugee influxes, trends are different. Portugal has historically received a very small number of asylum requests. Mariuca Stanciu remarks that during World War II Portugal turned out to be the transit place and safe haven for thousands of refugees looking to flee Nazi-occupied Europe for North America.⁴⁹ Between 1975 and 2015 Portugal only received 17,769 asylum application, granting 1,605 people refugee status and humanitarian protection.⁵⁰ Requests remained low in the 21st century, in part due to lack of appeal of the country compared to other EU destinations: 108 asylum applications in 2005,⁵¹ 161 in 2008,⁵² 299 in 2012⁵³ and 422 in 2014. The latter was the year before the crisis escalated, and consisted of requests from 48 nationalities, the most prominent ones being

⁴⁷ “Foreign population with legal status of residence by place of residence and Nationality,” Statistics Portugal (INE),

https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0001236&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2. (accessed 15 September 2017).

⁴⁸ Paulo Reis Mourão, “Socio-economic Determinants for the Portuguese Immigration: An Empirical Discussion”, *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 125, Issue 3, pg. 955–975 (February 2016), abstract page.

⁴⁹ Mariuca Stanciu, “Portugal and the Second World War Refugees: Attitudes and Actions,” *Holocaust Study and Research* Issue 1 No.9, (2016), pg.106.

⁵⁰ Paulo Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soaires, “‘You are welcome in Portugal’: conviction and convenience in framing today’s Portuguese politics on European burden sharing of refugees,” *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* Vol.6 No.2 (January 2017), pg.49.

⁵¹ “Pedidos de Asilo em Portugal – 2005” [Asylum Requests in Portugal - 2005], Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), http://refugiados.net/1cpr/www/estatisticas/pa_2005.html (accessed 15 September 2017).

⁵² “Pedidos de Asilo em Portugal – 2008” [Asylum Requests in Portugal - 2008], SEF, http://refugiados.net/1cpr/www/estatisticas/pa_2008.html (accessed 15 September 2017).

⁵³ “Pedidos de Asilo em Portugal – 2012” [Asylum Requests in Portugal - 2012], SEF, http://refugiados.net/1cpr/www/estatisticas/pa_2012.html (accessed 15 September 2017).

Ukraine (17 requests), Pakistan (26) and Morocco (25).⁵⁴ Ukraine became the main country of origin of the refugee population in Portugal. Cátia Bruno presents the individual case of Ukrainian refugee Emine Shykhmetova's arrival: "Emine's family chose to come to Portugal almost by chance. They wanted to go someplace far away, but still in Europe. Ideally, the climate would be similar to Crimea's, the country would be open and tolerant towards refugees, and it would also be a NATO member, where the family would feel safe. They took all of this into consideration and ended up choosing Portugal."⁵⁵

In Portugal there is indeed a tradition of welcoming foreigners, but usually those bound by culture. Cristina Santinho argues that, because refugees constitute a very small group in Portugal, both in comparison to immigrants in the country and to refugee populations in other EU countries, "This contributes to an invisibility of the topic within contemporary Portuguese society, and lack of in-depth debate on the everyday realities and difficulties of this group."⁵⁶ Much like the refugee population in Portugal has never been substantial, I argue that so have the reception and integration policies not had the opportunity to develop or be prioritized.

With relatively low numbers and static nationalities of origin, the issue of refugees as a vulnerable group in Portugal has been absent from the political agenda or civil society advocacy. This even materializes in academia. Santinho argues refugees only became a relevant issue as the crisis intensified in 2015, while "academics have always shown a great deal of interest in immigration, in its various aspects (health, access to employment, access

⁵⁴ "Pedidos de Asilo em Portugal – 2014" [Asylum Requests in Portugal - 2014], SEF, http://refugiados.net/1cpr/www/pa_2014.php (accessed 15 September 2017).

⁵⁵ Cátia Bruno, "Seeking refuge in distant Portugal", *New Eastern Europe* Issue 2 (2016), pg.160.

⁵⁶ Maria Cristina Santinho, "Afinal, que asilo é este que não nos protege?" [After all, what is this Asylum that does not protect us?], pg.6.

to immigration, interethnic relations, racism).”⁵⁷ Ana Rita Gil, another renowned Portuguese scholar in the field, reiterates that “despite the increase of interest on asylum after 2015, it is still very unusual for law schools to provide comprehensive education on this topic. (...) The same cannot be said in other EU countries, where many Law faculties have centers on Immigration Law (v.g. Radboud Nijmegen University) or provide a permanent and annual courses on Immigration and Asylum Law (Free University of Brussels).”⁵⁸ Refugee issues have not been prioritized at a national or local level because there has never been enough practical impact for it to be socio-politically relevant in Portugal. The same does not apply to other EU Member States. Countries such as Sweden and Germany have long integrated refugee populations. For contrast, a brief presentation of these two EU Member-States as asylum countries is given below.

With a population of 9,995,153 persons,⁵⁹ Sweden was the destination of 28,939 asylum-seekers in 2016 alone, receiving more refugees per capita than any other country. It is the second country with most asylum requests in the EU and has labeled itself as a ‘humanitarian superpower’. Sweden took in refugees during and after World War II, many of which stayed and were joined in the 1950s and 60s by economic migrants “from Finland, Italy, Greece, the former Yugoslavia, Turkey, and other Balkan countries who came looking for job opportunities.”⁶⁰ The last decades had an exponential rise in asylum-seekers in Sweden: the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) led to 34,000 nationals receiving residence permits, the

⁵⁷ Interview with Cristina Santinho, Immigration and Refugees scholar, 18 September, 2017.

⁵⁸ Ana Rita Gil, Immigration scholar, email to the author, 12 September, 2017.

⁵⁹ “Asylum-seekers during the year by country of citizenship and sex. Year 2002 – 2016,” Statistics Sweden, http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101P/Asylsokande/?rxid=4f6ac4ef-99c7-40b1-8b9b-aa5715e371aa (accessed 16 September 2017).

⁶⁰ “Sweden and Migration – Post-war immigration 1940-1979,” Swedish Government, <https://sweden.se/migration/#1940> (accessed 19 September 2017).

Yugoslav wars (1991-99) made for asylum to 100,000 Bosnians and 3,6000 Kosovar Albanians, and finally the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria produced the most common nationalities currently taking refuge.⁶¹ For instance, “in 2007 the small town [of Södertälje] accepted 1,268 Iraqis, which equaled 5 per cent of all Iraqis arriving in Europe or 1.5 per cent of the population of Södertälje.”⁶² In the peak year of 2015, 163,000 asylum seekers reached Sweden until migration laws were changed to manage inflows and national security. Fredrik Bengtsson of the Swedish Migration Agency, was right to label Sweden “a key destination and recipient country for asylum seekers.”⁶³

As the Member State hosting the most refugees, Germany is the front runner for refuge from persecution but also labor opportunities and socioeconomic stability. Germany carries a long history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, known as *Willkommenskultu*. The Federal Statistics Office reports that Germany’s foreign population actually consists of more non-EU citizens (5,094,714 persons) than EU (4,013,179 persons).⁶⁴ To boost its post-war economy in the 1960s, the German government signed agreements with countries such as Turkey, Italy, Greece and Spain to recruit ‘guest workers’ and, since then, has welcomed millions of ethnic Germans fleeing Soviet rule, and millions of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Most prominently, the Turkish immigrant population has kept growing and “today, around 2.5 million people with a Turkish background live in Germany, meaning either they or their parents were born in Turkey,

⁶¹ “Sweden and Migration – Rise of asylum-seekers 1980-1999,” Swedish Government, <https://sweden.se/migration/#1980> (accessed 19 September 2017).

⁶² “Sweden and Migration – Iraq War and EU migration 2000-2012,” Swedish Government, <https://sweden.se/migration/#2000> (accessed 19 September 2017).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ “Foreign population,” DE Statist, <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/ForeignPopulation/Tables/ForeignerResidenceStatus.html> (accessed 15 September 2017).

making them the largest migrant group in the country. Around 700,000 Turkish migrants have German citizenship.”⁶⁵ Germany has shown to be a culturally and ethnically diverse nation.

In view of this history of integration in Sweden and Germany, a snowball effect is produced in that new incoming refugees chase countries with already-established networks to more easily settle into the labor market and communal living. Jeff Crisp argues that “even those asylum-seekers who merit refugee status have clear preferences in relation to their ultimate destination, and their migration is often facilitated by means of transnational social networks.”⁶⁶ Research into refugee flows and especially secondary movements must note that forced migrants indeed flee persecution, but also consider other factors in their decision to flee or to leave their country of designated asylum.

PORTUGUESE ASYLUM LAW AND REFUGEE RECEPTION AT PRESENT

“Unaccustomed to inward migration and located far from the main pathways into Europe, Portugal’s bid to attract an unprecedented number refugees will mean an integration challenge both for newcomers and hosts. It remains to be seen where the country’s new politics of welcome is sustained or whether they will be remembered as a timely measure to boost Portugal’s standing in the EU.” – Paulo Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soares, 2017.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “Turkish guest workers transformed German society,” Deutsche Welle, 30 November 2011, <http://p.dw.com/p/12zRy> (accessed 19 September 2017).

⁶⁶ Jeff Crisp, “Policy challenges of the new diasporas: migrant networks and their impact on asylum flows and regimes,” 30 May 1999, pg. 5, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ff5948e2.html> (accessed 18 October 2017).

⁶⁷ Paulo Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soares, “Portugal’s Openness to Refugees Makes Demographic and Economic Sense,” News Deeply, 10 February 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/02/10/portugals-openness-to-refugees-makes-demographic-and-economic-sense> (accessed 15 August 2017).

Despite its modest refugee history, Portugal is an international actor that respects refugee rights. Portugal acceded to the Refugee Convention and the Protocol in 1960 and 1976, respectively and Article 33-8 of the Portuguese Constitution guarantees the right to asylum to “foreigners and stateless persons persecuted or seriously threatened with persecution.”⁶⁸ It abides by universal human rights and European values of democracy, tolerance and rule of law.

The concession of international protection and the status of refugee under Portuguese law can be found in Ordinary Law no.27/2008 of 30 June.⁶⁹ It bridges into national law the European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 together with Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005: the former established “minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection,”⁷⁰ and the latter “minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status.”⁷¹ The 2008 Ordinary Law introduced resettled refugees as a legal figure in Portuguese domestic law, better connecting the legal system to that of the three long-term solutions for forced migrants established by the UNHCR: Voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement in stable states. Regarding asylum-seekers awaiting a decision on their application for

⁶⁸ Portuguese Republic, *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic* (Lisboa: Direcção-Geral da Comunicação Social, 1991), Article 33-8.

⁶⁹ Diário da República, Lei n°27/2008 de 30 Junho – 1ª série N°124, <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1s/2008/06/12400/0400304018.pdf> (accessed 30 August 2017).

⁷⁰ Official Journal of the European Union, *COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2004/83/EC of 29 April (2004)*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004L0083&from=PT> (accessed 21 September 2017).

⁷¹ Official Journal of the European Union, *COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 (2005)*, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:326:0013:0034:EN:PDF> (accessed 21 September 2017).

international protection, the same Ordinary Law grants the right to access social aid,⁷² medical assistance,⁷³ education⁷⁴ and the right to work.⁷⁵ This is particularly beneficial for spontaneous asylum-seekers - those arriving in national territory without assistance from the government or accredited institutions - owing to the fact that they can be in Portugal for a long time, have their application rejected and even possibly decide to appeal, all the while holding a job with income. It is a generous framework compared to other EU countries, possibly rooted in Portugal's positive experience with immigrants and low number of refugees that would make use of such favorable laws. Ireland, for example, ruled on 29 May 2017 that asylum-seekers are prohibited from working before their application has been finalized and refugee status has been granted.⁷⁶ The Portuguese law further stipulates asylum-seekers can extend an application to their family and have the right to stay in the country until a decision has been made following an interview by SEF (Article 11-1 of Ordinary Law 27/2008 of 30 June). Here they must substantiate their request with as much documentation

⁷² Article 51 of Ordinary Law no.27/2008 reads: "To applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection in a situation of economic and social deprivation and to the members of their family, social support is provided for accommodation and food, in accordance with the legislation in force" - Diário da República, Lei nº27/20008 de 30 Junho – 1ª série Nº124, <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1s/2008/06/12400/0400304018.pdf> (accessed 30 August 2017).

⁷³ Article 52 of Ordinary Law no.27/2008 reads: "Access to the National Health Service, under the terms to be defined by ordinance of the members of the Government responsible for the areas of internal administration and health. The document proving the filing of the application for international protection or subsidiary protection, issued in accordance with article 14, is considered sufficient to prove the status of applicant" - Diário da República, Lei nº27/20008 de 30 Junho – 1ª série Nº124.

⁷⁴ Article 53 of Ordinary Law no.27/2008 reads: "Minor children of applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection and minor applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection have access to the education system under the same conditions as national citizens and other citizens for whom the Portuguese language does not constitute a mother tongue" - Diário da República, Lei nº27/20008 de 30 Junho – 1ª série Nº124.

⁷⁵ Article 54 of Ordinary Law no.27/2008 reads: "Applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection who have already been granted a provisional residence permit are granted access to the labor market, under the terms of the general law" - Diário da República, Lei nº27/20008 de 30 Junho – 1ª série Nº124.

⁷⁶ Section 16(3)(b) of the Irish International Protection Act 2015 determines that "an applicant shall not seek, enter or be in employment or engage for gain in any business, trade or profession." *in* <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/66/section/16/enacted/en/html> (accessed 2 October 2017).

as possible (identification, travel, persecution account, etc., as mandated in Article 15 of the same Law).

Portugal is an exemplary global actor that has ratified all human rights treaties related to refugee rights and adheres to all EU directives on managing irregular migration. However, in point of fact, such formal contractual behavior has not translated into successful refugee integration or even substantial inflows into Portugal, but rather abandonments.

PORTUGUESE POLITICAL WELCOME VIS-À-VIS PREFERRED REFUGEE ROUTES

“It is natural that those who have already coursed thousands of miles with a dream of living their lives in a country they long have as a reference for prosperity and future, have some difficulty in reorienting their journey. What we can do is not prohibit anyone from going to another country, but communicate that we are available and it is with great pleasure that we will receive those who wish to live with us.” – Prime Minister António Costa, 2016, in a visit to the Eleonas refugee camp in Greece.⁷⁷

While several EU countries have seen a rise in nationalism, Portugal remains welcoming to the socioeconomic benefits this incoming population can bring. On the other hand, while several EU countries have larger refugee networks and hosting experience, Portugal lacks the exposure and the preparation or training in attending to refugees. Reports reveal of the 633 asylum applications made in 2015, 312 were admitted, 103 were refused

⁷⁷ “Costa para refugiados: “Não tenho a chave da fronteira da Alemanha,” [Costa to Refugees: “I Don’t Have The Key To The German Border”], *Diário de Notícias*, 11 April 2016, <http://www.dn.pt/portugal/interior/costa-para-refugiados-nao-tenho-a-chave-da-fronteira-da-alemanha-5121249.html> (accessed 15 May 2017).

and 31 withdrew the application.⁷⁸ Despite political support and an open door policy on the part of the country, it doesn't suffice to turn Portugal into a popular destination.

Portugal is a fairly homogenous ethnic and religious country, with a prominent 81 per cent Roman Catholic majority and a left or center-leaning political stability.⁷⁹ The current government is led by center-left party Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*) and the most recent elections, at a municipal level, confirmed this to still be the most influential, garnering 37.8 per cent of the votes against 16.1 per cent by the center-right (Social Democratic Party, or *Partido Social Democrata*).⁸⁰ A nationalist party founded in 2000, National Renovator Party or *Partido Nacional Renovador*, has never gotten enough votes to even have a seat in the National Assembly or in the European Parliament, gathering 0.10 per cent of votes in the 2017 municipal elections.

António Costa, current Prime Minister of Portugal, has been vocal about his welcoming stance toward refugees and asylum-seekers, even declaring Portugal to be able to take in more refugees than those attributed under the EU emergency relocation plan.⁸¹ According to the distribution quota devised by the EC, Portugal was to relocate 388 refugees from Italy and 1254 from Greece in an effort to alleviate arrival countries, yet Costa has unilaterally declared the country to have immediate availability to host 1,250 refugees⁸² and

⁷⁸ "Portugal tem 1500 refugiados. Pedidos aumentaram em 2015," [Portugal has 1500 Refugees. Applications went up in 2015], RTP, 12 September 2015, <http://www.dn.pt/portugal/interior/portugal-tem-1500-refugiados-pedidos-aumentaram-em-2015-4774785.html> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁷⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Portugal," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/po.html> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁸⁰ "Autárquicas 2017" [Municipalities 2017], Público, 8 October 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/autarquicas-2017/resultados> (accessed 9 October 2017).

⁸¹ Official Journal of the European Union, *COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece* (2015).

⁸² "António Costa garante que Portugal tem disponibilidade imediata para acolher 1250 refugiados" [António Costa assures Portugal has immediate availability to host 1250 refugees], *Diário de Notícias*, 26

proposed a total quota of 10,000.⁸³ This declaration, although not yet implemented, did not raise any controversy but rather across-the-board support from all parties, including Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. At the May 2017 ceremony of the Council of Europe North-South Prize, Rebelo de Sousa praised Portugal as a “plural and diverse mosaic of cultures where xenophobia and the so-called extremist populists have no room to bear fruit. (...) an open and multicultural society where dialogue between civilizations is consensually practiced.”⁸⁴ Former US President Barack Obama also mentioned Portugal’s solidarity in a September 2016 speech on refugee protection at the United Nations, saying “I would like to commend Germany, Canada, Austria, the Netherlands, and Australia for their continued leadership, as well as countries such as Argentina and Portugal for their new commitments.”⁸⁵

Regarding Portugal’s role as an EU refugee host country amidst the crisis, Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs Sara Carvalho Marques argues: “Despite its relatively small size and economic struggles, Portugal's policy in the context of this refugee crisis has been marked by continuity, with a solidarity and openness approach, regardless of the parties in power. Portugal has also received around 50 refugees under the “1:1” scheme agreed between the EU and Turkey and under resettlement processes, both cases involving the

September 2017, [http://www.dn.pt/portugal/interior/antonio-costa-garante-que-portugal-tem-disponibilidade-imediata-para-acolher-1250-refugiados-5121122.html](http://www.dn.pt/portugal/interior/antonio-costa-garante-que-portugal-tem-disponibilidade-imediate-para-acolher-1250-refugiados-5121122.html) (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁸³ Paulo Manuel Costa and Lúcio Soares, ‘Portugal’s Openness to Refugees Makes Demographic and Economic Sense,’ News Deeply, 10 February 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/02/10/portugals-openness-to-refugees-makes-demographic-and-economic-sense> (accessed 15 August 2017).

⁸⁴ Maria Lopes, ‘Portugal é uma democracia inclusiva e sem espaço para populistas extremistas, diz Marcelo’ [Portugal is an Inclusive Democracy and Without no Space for Populist Extremists, says Marcelo], Público, 31 May 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2017/05/31/politica/noticia/marcelo-classifica-portugal-como-exemplo-de-democracia-e-de-tolerancia-1774080> (accessed 9 October 2017).

⁸⁵ ‘Refugiados: Obama elogia Portugal pelos seus novos compromissos’ [Refugees: Obama praises Portugal for its new commitments], TVI24, 21 September 2016, <http://www.tvi24.iol.pt/internacional/barack-obama/refugiados-obama-elogia-portugal-pelos-seus-novos-compromissos> (accessed 9 October 2017).

UNHCR and IOM.⁸⁶ With regard to spontaneous asylum applications, it should be noted that although relatively low levels remain (less than 1,000 people per year), numbers have been increasing. The first trimester of 2017 brought a significant rise (63.6 per cent), compared to the same period the previous year.”⁸⁷ Solidarity programs and international responsibilities aside, Portugal finds many social and economic benefits in welcoming refugees. The International Monetary Fund even suggested that “more could be done to increase migration inflows of Portuguese workers and other migrants to improve demographic and growth prospects.”⁸⁸ Marta Bronzin, Director of the International Organization for Migration in Portugal, argues that “Portugal has always had a very favorable discourse on migration, which now is a discourse of solution towards the demographic deficit and the negative birth rate.”⁸⁹ With the lowest birth rate in the EU,⁹⁰ an aging population and high emigration rates among the youth,⁹¹ integrating refugees can be construed as a political and economic strategy to revitalize fertility rates and the labor market. A positive narrative towards refugee communities is therefore amplified among Portuguese citizens by an awareness of the real benefits they can bring to the country.

Asylum requests and refugee population in Portugal remain low but numbers have been increasing. SEF reported 1,469 spontaneous requests for international protection in

⁸⁶ “UNHCR, IOM assist in relocation of refugees to Portugal,” UNHCR, 3 November 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/mt/news-and-views/press-releases/130-unhcr-iom-assist-in-relocation-of-refugees-to-portugal> (accessed 13 November 2017).

⁸⁷ Sara Carvalho Marques, Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs, email to the author, 27 June, 2017.

⁸⁸ International Monetary Fund, *IMF Country Report No.16/301: Portugal Selected Issues* (September 2016), pg.18, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr16301.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁸⁹ Interview with Marta Bronzin, Lisbon, 6 June, 2017.

⁹⁰ “Total fertility rate, 1960–2014 (live births per woman),” Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Total_fertility_rate,_1960%E2%80%932014_\(live_births_per_woman\)_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Total_fertility_rate,_1960%E2%80%932014_(live_births_per_woman)_YB16.png) (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁹¹ International Organization for Migration, “Portugal – Global Migration Flows,” <http://www.iom.int/countries/portugal> (accessed 15 May 2017).

Portugal in 2016, the biggest number in the last 15 years: 169 were European, of which 84 per cent were Ukrainian citizens and, out of the 642 from Asian countries, 428 were Syrian and 117 Iraqi.⁹²

Looking at the UNHCR resettlement figures, 691 asylum applications were filed in Portugal.⁹³ Detailed statistics can be found in the charts below (Charts 3, 4 & 5), showing how most asylum requests are made by men, and in national territory rather than in border posts. Regarding nationality, Ukraine is the predominant country of origin of asylum-seekers in Portugal, tied to the increase in Eastern immigrants in Portugal and consequent establishment of social networks that may assist asylum-seekers, followed by African countries and some Middle Eastern countries.

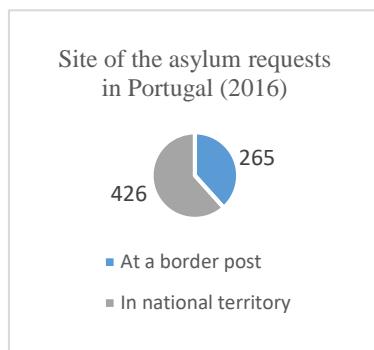


Chart 3: Site of the asylum requests in Portugal, 2016 (source: SEF)

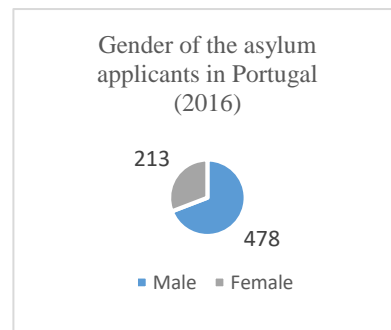


Chart 4: Gender of the asylum applicants in Portugal, 2016 (source: SEF)

⁹² Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), *Relatório de Imigração, Fronteiras e Asilo 2016* [Report on Immigration, Borders and Asylum], pg.43, 2016, <http://sefstat.sef.pt/Docs/Rifa2016.pdf> (accessed 21 September 2017).

⁹³ Portuguese Refugee Council, *Relatório de Actividades 2016* [Activity Report 2016], Lisbon, January 2017.

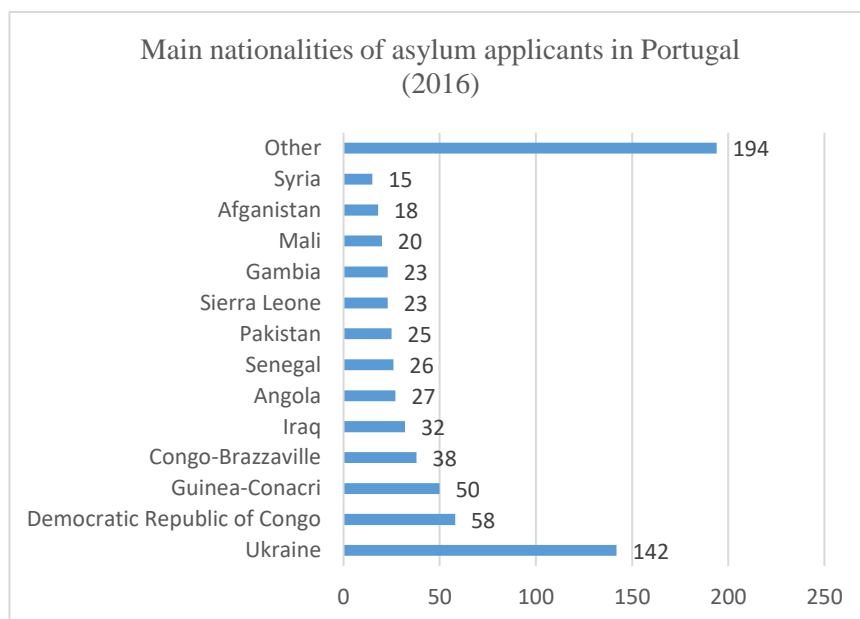


Chart 5: Main nationalities of asylum applicants in Portugal, 2016 (source: SEF)

Lastly, Portugal is well on its way to fulfill relocation pledges at an EU level. In November 2017, the EC reported that Portugal has a legal commitment to relocate 2,951 persons in the context of the emergency EU relocation mechanism and has formally pledged to relocate 3,218 persons from Italy and Greece.⁹⁴ To date, 315 have already been relocated from Italy and 1,192 from Greece. This means there are 1,444 (49 per cent) remaining places, which is well above the average. Austria, for instance, has yet to relocate 99.2 per cent, Belgium 73.8 per cent, Croatia 91.9 per cent and 82.6 per cent, besides, of course, the set of countries that have formally rejected the relocation mechanism (Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic).

In order to scrutinize my argument on Portugal's standing as an EU destination country, from the above figures I make the bridge to qualitative data on how refugees

⁹⁴ European Commission, "'Member States' Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism – as of 24 November 2017," https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_relocation_en.pdf (accessed 27 November 2017).

integrate once in Portugal. “Portugal is a good country to spend a holiday, not to spend your life,” is currently a sentence uttered by refugees who still reside in Portugal.”⁹⁵ My research will interpret the abandonment trend and how visibility, social support and institutional experience factor into refugees’ decision-making.

⁹⁵ Maria Cristina Santinho, “Refugiados e Requerentes de Asilo em Portugal: Contornos Políticos no Campo da Saúde” [Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Portugal: Political Countours in the Health Field] (Phd diss., ISCTE-IUL, 2011), pg.21

3 | FACTORS FACILITATING ABANDONMENT IN THE PORTUGUESE REFUGEE INTEGRATION SYSTEM

This thesis argues that refugees are not eager to settle in Portugal for asylum because it does not offer the long-established reception schemes and integration mechanisms other EU countries do, as possibly signaled by influential transnational networks of friends or family. Portugal displays high goodwill but plays an isolated role in the European refugee crisis: the system of reception and integration is undeveloped, the resources and capacity are scarce, the structure relies too heavily on volunteer social initiatives, the field presence in refugee camps is not significant and, finally, human factors of familial aspirations and reunifications affect the appeal as destination country. I present my argument for the high abandonment rate in Chart 6. Alternate theories that build off the main argument to play a role in explaining the high abandonments phenomenon are the removed geographical

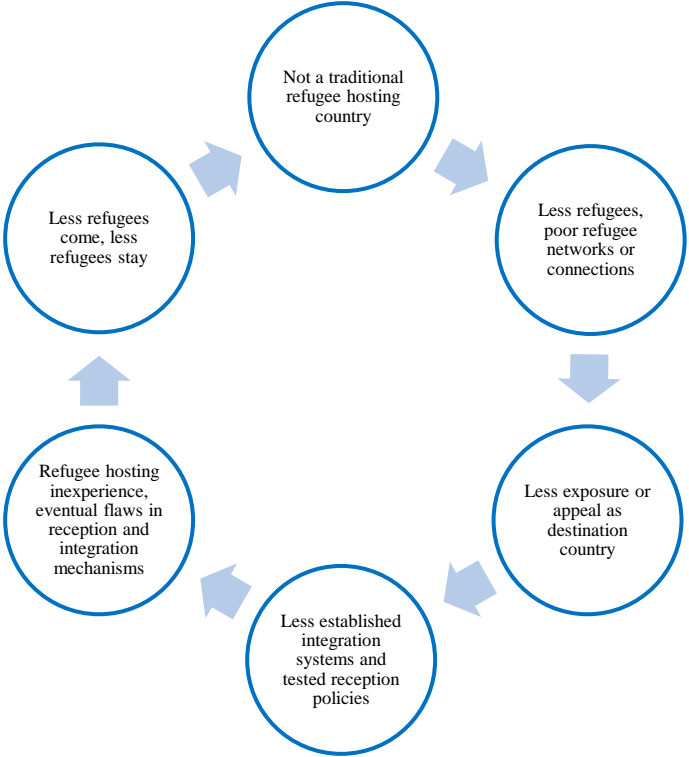


Chart 6: Cycle of refugee arrivals and integration in Portugal

location of Portugal, the lower wages, and the snowball effect of networks and reputation. These will be considered in relation to the underdevelopment of Portuguese refugee services and the relatively low flow of refugees to Portugal.

The Portuguese Immigration and Border Service (SEF) reports that 42 per cent of relocated refugees have chosen to leave the country⁹⁶ and an April 2017 piece reports the number of refugee leaving Portugal had doubled in the last two months.⁹⁷ This chapter informs my argument in examining how the field of legislation and policy merges with that of social networks and refugees' decision-making to produce the abandonment rates in Portugal in the context of the European refugee crisis.

INEXPERIENCED INTEGRATION SYSTEM

This is the first time in Portugal has had to give special consideration to refugees, reception facilities, and integration programs. The relevant authorities have no experience or training, and institutions have no precedent to rely on, which affects Portugal's attractiveness as an asylum destination. In Portugal, the topic of asylum and refugee is under the wing of the Ministry of Internal Administration but reception and integration is handled by three different systems.

Firstly, the Portuguese Refugee Council (*Conselho Português para os Refugiados*, CPR) is the official representation of the UNHCR in Portugal. The NGO handles incoming

⁹⁶ "Dois em cada cinco refugiados recolocados por Portugal abandonam o país," [Two in every five Relocated Refugees in Portugal leave the country], TSF, May 9 2017, <http://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/interior/dois-em-cada-cinco-refugiados-recolocados-por-portugal-abandonam-o-pais-7995135.html> (accessed May 15 2017).

⁹⁷ Amílcar Correia, "Porque é que os refugiados abandonam o país?" [Why Do Refugees Leave The Country?], Público, 29 April 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2017/04/29/sociedade/noticia/porque-fogem-os-refugiados-1770396> (accessed June 28 2017).

refugees under UNHCR resettlement programs, implementing an 18-month integration plan and offering free legal and social counselling: “With €6,000 per person throughout 18 months, the CPR pays for gas, electricity, water, and half the house rent and the city council pays the other half. A family of four receives €500 total per month, almost equivalent to the minimum wage, but has rent and utilities already paid, as well as an entitlement to rapid enrollment in school, and access to health.”⁹⁸ Teresa Tito de Morais, Director of the CPR, explains that the program has had very positive results for those who want to integrate into it but necessarily fails those who do not even try it: “We need to explain that they have an opportunity for safety and work here, in the short and long term, because it involves learning Portuguese and seeing how their skills can be integrated into the development of our local economy.”⁹⁹ Refugees who return months later cannot restart the 18 month integration process but make the best of the remaining time.

Secondly, the Refugee Support Platform (*Plataforma De Apoio Aos Refugiados*, PAR) was founded in September 2015 to support refugees arriving in Portugal under the EU relocation scheme. It is a platform of civil society organizations (i.e. local municipalities to charity associations, religious institutions and schools) and an initiative based on local engagement, “a model of communal integration,”¹⁰⁰ according to Rui Marques, one of its founders. The Portuguese government informs the municipalities of the refugee quota to be allocated in the area, then the municipalities either house families within the city council system or reach out to local institutions. These institutions with a contract agreement with

⁹⁸ Interview with Teresa Tito de Morais, Lisbon, 6 June, 2017.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Andreia Sanches, “Nasceu a Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados e Sabina deu a cara por ela” [The Refugee Platform was born and Sabina is the new face], *Público*, 4 September 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2015/09/04/sociedade/noticia/nasceu-a-plataforma-de-apoio-aos-refugiados-e-sabina-deu-a-cara-por-ela-1706862> (accessed 8 October 2017).

PAR must gather the resources to ensure accommodation, enrollment in school and health center, Portuguese classes, and aid in labor market integration.

Thirdly, varied *ad hoc* civil society initiatives promote a bettering of refugee-hosting dynamics of the Portuguese system by covering integration gaps.

Each system affords different access to services and opportunities, which is made worse when refugees become aware of differing systems. Elizabeth Challinor recalls that refugees talk amongst themselves and compare the services they enjoy: “Nationally and internationally there is a constant comparison of living prospects. In Portugal, there is also the fact that PAR contracts are 24 months and CPR contracts are 18 months. The way the integration strategy is organized means the government asks civil society to get involved and there are different consortiums of institutions responding in different ways.”¹⁰¹ In parallel to the various integration systems there is still the work of the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), in charge of asylum interviews and allocating international protection status.¹⁰² Tola Akindipe, co-founder of the civil society initiative Refugees Welcome Portugal, stresses that it “causes a lot of problems because there is not one accountable entity but rather several scattered responsible departments within other specialized agencies. This has consequently meant that no one has the documented expertise, compared to other European countries”¹⁰³ Support for refugees is commonly outsourced from the government to municipalities or local NGOs operating across the country. For instance, the Community Center of the Carcavelos Parish, one of PAR’s host institutions, found out they would receive

¹⁰¹ Interview with Elizabeth Challinor, 2 October, 2017.

¹⁰² ‘‘Assignments and Competencies,’’ Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), http://www.sef.pt/portal/V10/EN/asp/organizacao/index.aspx?id_linha=4166&menu_position=4131#0 (accessed 10 October 2017).

¹⁰³ Interview with Tola Akindipe, 7 September, 2017.

a Syrian family with just two days' notice. The local community was promptly mobilized to gather clothing and hygiene products while the Parish's team ensured enrollment in social security, the health center and the school: "We found accommodation for the first night at the Maristas School of Carcavelos and from there on shelter would be provided at an apartment rented by the Community Center, for which several people contributed in fully cleaning and furnishing it in one day."¹⁰⁴

The Portuguese integration system is not only flawed in lacking a single accountable platform – all these systems and services are new and untested considering the influx since 2015 is the first significant refugee wave into the country. As of yet, there is no plan for what comes after the 18 month period integration period of the CPR, or the 24 months period of the PAR. There is uncertainty regarding the rented accommodation, the assistance and the language classes when the protocol formally terminates. For instance, the Despertar psychological and training center signed a protocol with PAR in 2015 and in 2016 received a family of four. Patrícia Labandeiro explains that "By the time the family arrived we had a fully prepared 3-bedroom, locals had donated furniture, clothing, food, toys and supplies, and we had informed the relevant institutions (social security, landlords, kindergarten, language center, SEF)."¹⁰⁵ Despite being monitored by a specialized team and participating in community get-togethers, the couple displayed general unease in being far from family. Five months into their stay, they asked to visit family members in Austria: "We laid out all the risks and held a meeting with the local SEF office. They maintained the urge to go but with the intention of returning two weeks later. It was clear they feared what would happen at the

¹⁰⁴ Zulmira Pechirra, Carcavelos Parish social worker, email to the author, 6 June, 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Patrícia Labandeiro, founder of Despertar psychological and training center, email to the author, 6 October, 2017.

end of the PAR protocol if they did not have work and autonomy.”¹⁰⁶ The family had been absent for three months when Despertar terminated the protocol, given that sustaining a rented apartment for a family uncommitted to return was no longer viable. The family eventually asked to return to Viana do Castelo six months after leaving, yet it was impossible to re-arrange all the logistics for an imminent return, which meant they returned to another host institutions in another city in Portugal. The post-contractual anxiety spoke louder than community integration and the family acted upon it in trying to seek less vulnerable prospects.

The Carcavelos Parish has a similar view. On 20 December 2016 they received a Syrian family of four who established good relationships with locals. Yet the Parish is apprehensive over how successful this integration can be considered at the level Portuguese classes are going and the difficulty of securing jobs for the parents: “Given that our commitment to PAR is only for two years, we are now concerned about integrating them as soon as possible in a labor market and a housing situation compatible with the wages they shall receive. Only this way can they become autonomous and empowered.”¹⁰⁷ Since PAR was a recent response to the inflows, most contracts have yet to expire and there is no formal blueprint for what comes next. It is mostly handled on an individual basis by the host institutions and social or local partners depending on how the family has integrated and what their long-term prospects are, but an urgent unease remains.

On this note, Francisco Font Bell denounces how these integration gaps harshly affect refugees themselves: “As a refugee there is no motivation for integration, we are considered

¹⁰⁶ Patrícia Labandeiro, founder of Despertar psychological and training center, email to the author, 6 October, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

social excrement with a tendency for parasitism only with value of use for a limited period, whether for state, civil, or religious institutions, or other solidarity programs and NGOs that use refugees as source of financial revitalization of many of the social service structures.”¹⁰⁸ Font Bello has been living in Porto since 2005 and now leads the Union of Refugees in Portugal (UREP), a non-profit organization with the goals of integrating refugees in Portuguese society in cooperation with the relevant Portuguese entities.

Unlike other EU countries, Portuguese law is very generous to asylum-seekers but its institutions are still learning to deliver guarantees and prioritize this novel issue. Besides the lack of experience, another reason on why refugee services in Portugal may be underdeveloped is because of lack of budget, funding or pressure by the political forces to implement better policies or launch better systems. Cristina Santinho argues: “Despite access to health, education and the like being guaranteed, why don’t things work? One thing is access in the law but then comes reality. And the reality is that Portugal is a poor country where much of the population struggles to access these rights and secure employment. This is obviously a very important aspect when choosing a country, because people don’t choose a country because people are nice or the weather is good, but because there are real possibilities of effective integration through work and education.”¹⁰⁹ From the perspective of Mohamad Abou Ras, a refugee from Damascus, Syria who has been living in Lisbon since January 2017, he says “when Portugal accepted me, I did not know anything about Portugal, I did not know that Portugal is in the European Union.”¹¹⁰ His original destination when he reached Greece was Belgium, and is now studying at the ISCTE University in Lisbon and

¹⁰⁸ Francisco Font Bell, Cuban refugee in Portugal, email to the author, 18 October 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Cristina Santinho, 18 September, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Mohamad Abou Ras, Syrian refugee in Portugal, email to the author, 19 September, 2017.

teaching Arabic. He considers Portugal's insufficient contact with refugees to be "an opportunity to prove ourselves."¹¹¹ In line with Portugal being a recent host EU Member State, Akindipe of Refugees Welcome Portugal notes after a visit to Greece that "Actually one of the reasons why Portugal hasn't taken in more refugees is because families in Greece are rejecting moving to Portugal for the last two years. When they hear they get Portugal, they reject it and rather wait for another opportunity for asylum somewhere else."¹¹² Certain asylum-seekers choose staying in camps over relocating to countries they don't believe match their familial or professional prospects.

Ultimately, the Portuguese integration system is still being clarified, unfortunately at a later stage than other EU countries which started hosting refugees earlier. While Portugal still has to test out mechanisms and train the relevant authorities, other countries can already deliver better proof-tested mechanisms. This deters refugees from perceiving Portugal as a sound country to settle in.

HOUSING LIMITATIONS AND INADEQUACIES

Linked to the gap between the guarantees in law and the offers in reality, a core problem in the Portuguese integration system is the limited accommodation. It severely affects refugees residing in Portugal and asylum-seekers looking to come to Portugal. This difficulty was even noted in the European Commission's Thirteenth Report on Relocation and Resettlement of June 2017, which highlights how "Member States with reception capacity limitations (Ireland, Finland and Portugal) have worked towards solving the

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Interview with Tola Akindipe, 7 September, 2017.

difficulties.”¹¹³ It is an internal problem that links the country to external refugee networks in a bad light.

Andreia Cardoso is a Portuguese volunteer in the Skaramangas refugee camp, currently leading a project with the NGO *Drop in the Ocean* (DiH) for refugees soon-to-be relocated from Greece to Portugal. At the time of the June interview, 130 refugees living at Skaramangas or apartments in Athens had been waiting since January for the Portuguese Embassy to give the green light to board the plane to Portugal. The relocation process had been stalled due to accommodation shortage: “The project was launched by DiH precisely to avoid a loss of interest on the part of the selected refugees, and also to bring them closer to the idea of going to Portugal because a six months waiting time is long and actually not common. With Sweden it was one month, for example. Portugal is perhaps the only host country that has no refugee camp. That is, all incoming families or individuals are housed in institutions, shelters, or homes that are assigned by parishes or by organizations, associations, etc. What happened was a point was reached when housing was no longer available, and that is what caused this delay. (...) But I will not lie, with this six months waiting time, the idea about Portugal was very negative.”¹¹⁴ The housing deficit inevitably affects Portugal’s ability to exercise power or implement its good will.

There is in fact limited housing available despite the critical focus the government has made on partnerships with city councils and other accredited institutions. In July 2017,

¹¹³ European Commission, *Thirteenth report on relocation and resettlement - COM(2017) 330 final* (13 June 2017), pg.4.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Andreia Cardoso, Athens, 21 June 2017.

the Mayor of Lisbon launched a contest to promote temporary housing for fifty refugees in need so as to bolster a better integration outside of refugee centers and a faster autonomy.¹¹⁵

The Salesianos Foundation, another PAR institutions, relied on strong partnerships with the local city council for integration. The second family they received arrived from Greece in April 2017 and Paula Cristina Baptista, Dean of the Salesianos School in Estoril, noted they “had no more houses in our Foundation, so one was provided by the Municipality of Cascais,”¹¹⁶ which even agreed to exempt the family from paying electricity or water bills. Once the fourth child of the first family was born, it was also the Cascais City Council who guaranteed a daycare for the baby while the mother was at work or in Portuguese class through a new partnership with the school.

Regarding the housing of refugees, one particular problem has been distribution: the vast majority of refugees in the CPR system are accommodated in the refugee centers in Bobadela, the outskirts of Lisbon. It inescapably prevents proper community integration seeing that they do not assimilate with locals or the more cosmopolitan city center, but rather stay in the refugee hub. Obai Radwan, a Palestinian refugee living in Portugal for five years, recounts his first three weeks in the country under CPR accommodation: “It was so crowded, seven people in a room and one kitchen for everyone on the center, about 100 persons. Curfew was at 11PM, as if we lived in a prison.”¹¹⁷ In 2016 CPR housed 785 refugees in the Refugee Reception Center (*Centro de Acolhimento para Refugiados*), 54 children and unaccompanied minors in the Reception House for Refugee Children House (*Casa de*

¹¹⁵ “Câmara de Lisboa quer que instituições apoiem refugiados em habitações temporárias” [Lisbon Municipal hall wants institutions to support refugees in temporary housing], *Público*, 7 June 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2017/06/07/local/noticia/camara-de-lisboa-quer-que-instituicoes-apoem-refugiados-em-habitacoes-temporarias-1774923> (accessed 8 October 2017).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Obai Radwan, Palestinian refugee in Portugal, email to the author, 19 October 2017

Acolhimento para Crianças Refugiadas), and 162 refugees in the context of partnerships with the INATEL foundation and city councils.¹¹⁸

PAR made efforts to combat this issue by establishing “A disperse reception system that involves local communities and promotes the integration of refugees in the context of their community.”¹¹⁹ Chart 7 displays how refugee families have been relocated nationwide, from Braga in the North to Faro in the South: 36.2 per cent of all refugee families are integrated in the two Portuguese metropolitan areas, Lisbon and Porto; Lisbon¹²⁰ counts 34 institutions that host a total of 38 families (181 refugees supported in total), while Porto¹²¹ has 21 member institutions supporting a total of 22 families (91 refugees). The Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs, Sara Carvalho Marques, highlights that “the fact there was a bet on geographical dispersion in reception despite requiring some creativity and additional effort on the part of all those involved, seems to me a correct strategy to minimize the potential risks

Locality	Host institutions
Aveiro	6
Braga	12
Porto	21
Viana do Castelo	2
Vila Real	2
Viseu	6
Castelo Branco	3
Coimbra	5
Guarda	2
Leiria	6
Santarém	6
Lisboa	34
Setúbal	10
Portalegre	3
Évora	3
Faro	3
Total	124

Chart 7: Number of Refugee Support Platform host institutions nationwide, as of October 2017 (source: PAR)

¹¹⁸ Portuguese Refugee Council, *Relatório de Actividades 2016* [Activity Report 2016], Lisbon, January 2017.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ “Instituições Anfitriãs – Lisboa,” Refugee Support Platform, <http://www.refugiados.pt/lisboa/> (accessed 10 October 2017).

¹²¹ “Instituições Anfitriãs – Porto,” Refugee Support Platform, <http://www.refugiados.pt/porto/> (accessed 10 October 2017).

of ghettoization.”¹²² It is however important to note that, when the website was consulted, it did not appear to make notice of the families that had left their host institution. For this reason, the number of active host institutions may be smaller – for instance Viana do Castelo still counts two institutions as hosts, when the Despertar center rescinded its contract this year.

Moreover, Portugal is one of the few European countries that does not have refugee camps.¹²³ All incoming refugees are integrated in institutional or private volunteer housing facilities, which is honorable but generates a great reliance on civil society in lieu of government mechanisms. Minister Eduardo Cabrita even highlights, “We differ from other countries because we do not have and will not have refugee camps. We think that this must correspond to an effort from society as a whole.”¹²⁴ This accommodation framework causes less refugees to settle in Portugal by limiting the ability for Portugal to take in all the refugees its political and social elites are eager to host. It also hinders the willingness of refugees to stay in Portugal under frail accommodations conditions, therefore also fulfilling the cycle I used to present my argument in Chart 6.

RELIANCE ON SCATTERED CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES WITH ABSENT FUNDING

In view of the insufficient integration system and lacking housing availability, the government has relied on outsourcing assistance to civil society to meet the basic needs of

¹²² Sara Carvalho Marques, Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs, email to the author, 27 June, 2017.

¹²³ As mentioned by Andreia Cardoso in page 56 of this thesis.

¹²⁴ “Portugal distingue-se “porque não tem nem vai ter campos de refugiados,” [Portugal distinguishes itself “because it does not and will not have refugee camps”], *Renascença*, 6 March 2017, <http://rr.sapo.pt/noticia/77660/portugal-distingue-se-porque-nao-tem-nem-vai-ter-campos-de-refugiados> (accessed 12 October 2017).

refugees. While at first glance this may appear as another trace of Portuguese openness, it is certainly also born out of a need to cover integration gaps left by the disjointed formal institutions. It is another factor persuading refugees to leave for other Schengen Member States. No matter how many solidarity initiatives exist, the majority of refugees are still left unassisted and dependent on the formal system of integration, which in turn doesn't assure a thorough integration.

For example, spontaneous refugees - those who arrive at the border seeking asylum and are not covered by neither of the accredited systems observed (UNHCR resettlement and EU relocation) - encounter added problems in not receiving formal assistance. Moreover, the PAR system only supports families, not single refugees or non-accompanied minors. "There is a lot that goes on beyond the formality, all driven by civil society,"¹²⁵ argues Challinor. This offers no stability in that NGOs often lack funding and don't offer all-encompassing or sustained assistance to all refugees.

The Syrian restaurant Mezze was founded given "a perception that the reception obligations were being met, but not those of integration. This is why we created a project exclusively for integration."¹²⁶ Launched in September 2017, Mezze became the first Syrian restaurant in Portugal with team members consisting of resettled UNHCR refugees, mostly directed at female refugees, usually carrying less professional experience or formal education. "These people who arrive do not have the responsibility to resolve integration on their own because we are the ones with the tools and, therefore, the responsibility. This entire project required a network of connections that only someone established in society could

¹²⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Challinor, 2 October, 2017.

¹²⁶ Interview with Francisca Gorjão Henriques, 2 May, 2017.

achieve,”¹²⁷ says co-founder Francisca Gorjão Henriques. The project was motivated by the realization of a gap between the expectation refugees have upon arrival and the tardiness with which bureaucratic matters are handled, namely school enrollment, medical care and the attribution of refugee status itself. This projects is very encouraging but nevertheless one that only employs 12 refugees. It shows how the official reception system is flawed in depending on the agility of civil society connections to properly integrate refugees into the labor market or community.

Refugees Welcome Portugal is another civil society NGO that came about as a response to integration faults in the formal system. One of the co-founders had interned at the CPR and noticed the oftentimes poor and secluded living conditions, for “refugees in Portugal live in Bobadela, which is North Lisbon and close to the CPR. But this means they don’t integrate at all, so our main goal is to better integrate refugees by means of housing. When people live together you can meet new people and understand more about the host culture.”¹²⁸ Refugees Welcome Portugal is currently in Lisbon and Porto, and has matched 18 people with landlords who have registered with the organization. The match is set for three months to one year, which can be extended, and the first three months are usually rent-free to accommodate refugees without income. However, funding in Portugal is a critical issue - in Germany private funding is very high and there are many more foundations, whereas in Portugal the fact that not only funding is limited but also the number of refugee arrivals leads to a competitiveness among NGOs. Co-founder Tola Akindipe adamantly believes that “if there were more collaborative work with NGOs in Portugal, then actually

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Interview with Tola Akindipe, 7 September, 2017.

there wouldn't be any issues because there are not that many refugees."¹²⁹ He praises the Portuguese commitment to solidarity obligations, but nevertheless regrets the absence of all-encompassing governmental support that can deliver the promised assistance for incoming refugees.

Funding has also been an issue for the Global Platform for Syrian Students, an NGO founded in 2013 by former President Jorge Sampaio. He says "We have received thousands of applications from Syrian students and everyday new requests arrive. Our main obstacle is really the lack of funding."¹³⁰ In the current 2017-18 academic year, the humanitarian scholarship program awarded 12 grants to Syrian students in partnership with the High Commissioner for Migration, a decrease from 45 in its first year and 50 the next. The problem isn't the civil society initiatives themselves, but that the formal integration system depends on *ad hoc* initiatives for an adequate integration of refugees

ABSENCE OF REFUGEE NETWORKS

In not being a traditional host country, Portugal lacks a substantial refugee community. The institutional state failings and lacking material resources make up my argument as to why refugees do not prefer Portugal as a destination country in the EU. Yet networks play a role in the appeal of a country of asylum. Web of contacts afford better integration prospects to new arrivals and spread information on available local opportunities to other asylum-seekers. Any informal refugee network at a national or local level has the capacity to raise Portugal's visibility and attractiveness as well as the rate of arrivals and retentions. In not

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ "Highlighting the need to prioritise access to higher education in humanitarian crises," European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 6 May 2017, <https://www.ecre.org/highlighting-the-need-to-prioritise-access-to-higher-education-in-humanitarian-crises/> (accessed 8 October 2017).

being a traditional host country or an appealing destination for large populations of refugees to settle, this has yet to happen in Portugal. The network argument goes hand in hand with the lacking state policies argument, being reciprocally influenced.

The past decade may have seen an increase in Ukrainian refugees seeking asylum in Portugal - 20.5 per cent of the total in 2016 (142 requests)¹³¹- but this inflow has a different scope than the one related to the refugee crisis. Santinho argues, “It is a different type of refuge precisely because they do not depend so much on state support since most of them already have their networks set up here in Portugal, owing to the fact that there are many Ukrainian immigrants living here.”¹³² It regards Eastern European asylum-seekers that directly chose Portugal as destination, rather than Middle Eastern asylum-seekers reaching external European borders and having to be redistributed by resettlement or relocation schemes. Portugal lacks connections amongst refugees in Portugal and those still in camps or the countries of origin. This isolates Portugal as ideal destination when refugees head toward Europe.

Firstly, the country reacted to the massive refugee inflows later than other EU Member States: others advanced integration systems and established networks while Portugal had yet to take action on refugee matters. Consequently, first-responders such as Germany and Sweden built up a reputation as ideal destination countries, which has led to the unequal distribution of asylum-seekers among the EU28 (Chart 1). From the field in Greece, Cardoso observes: “When I started as a volunteer, I did not realize why Germany was a major focus for everyone. I later realized it is the same as the Portuguese migrating to France or Canada

¹³¹ Conselho Português para os Refugiados, Relatório de Actividades 2016 [Activity Report 2016], (January 2017), pg.38

¹³² Interview with Cristina Santinho, 18 September, 2017.

based on a historical trend in which people relied on opinions and network. Right now Syria has a part of the population that settled in Germany some years ago and, based on this, many refugees want to go there. Moreover, the forced displacement of many was done as a family. As family members separated or could not all cross over before Macedonia closed the border with Greece, some managed to reach Germany, or any other country in Europe, and the rest of the family stayed behind. So of course there is a will for family reunification. If the family were in Portugal, they might have the underlining will to go to Portugal.”¹³³ All-encompassing efforts by Portuguese authorities and civil society are put into integrating arriving refugees, but pre-existing aspirations of refugees inhibit the process.

In line with this snowball effect, Ana Rita Gil argues: “This different distribution is connected with refugees’ expectations, North-South economic inequalities and residing communities. Most refugees are not coming to the EU, but to a specific country - many were smuggled by traffickers who “sold” them a trip to a specific destination. Moreover, many of them have never heard about Portugal before as Portugal did not have a tradition of welcoming migrants from Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan.”¹³⁴ When undergoing a traumatic experience such as forced displacement, it is only human that asylum-seekers chase connections that may grant stronger stability. Concerning the family who abandoned the program, Labandeiro says: “There wasn’t an express will to leave the city or country, rather a willingness to reunite with family and see if in this larger social support network they could build a future with more financial guarantees.”¹³⁵ Thus, Portugal is a relatively new host state

¹³³ Interview with Andreia Cardoso, Athens, 21 June 2017.

¹³⁴ Ana Rita Gil, Immigration scholar, email to the author, 12 September, 2017.

¹³⁵ Patrícia Labandeiro, email to the author, 6 October, 2017.

unlike countries like Germany and Sweden which already built a network of friends and family who can give the arriving vulnerable persons guidance in a time of drastic change.

Secondly, Portugal is located at the Western tip of Europe, far from the main refugee routes (Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Central Mediterranean). This fact contributes to its omission in refugee networks developing along the most travelled routes. In contrast, even though Hungary is not pledging nor relocating from Greece or from Italy, in breach of their legal obligation,¹³⁶ asylum applications are still abundant (8.52 per cent of all Syrian asylum application in EU Member States, as seen in Chart 1) due to their position within the Western Balkan route and Eastern EU external border. As the number of refugees settling in Portugal slowly rises, so does a system of connections amongst them in an effort to collectively improve their quality of life. Labandeiro notes that during the pre-arrival arrangements for the family: “We were in contact with another Syrian family who has lived in Viana do Castelo for three years and helped with us write some arrival information in Arabic so [the incoming family] would feel more comfortable.”¹³⁷ Syrian refugee Mohamad Abou Ras founded ‘Arabic Hands–Mãos Árabs’ in October 2017, a project to support female refugees by providing the possibility to work from home and contribute to their families' finances. This project was only made possible by Abou Ras’ mobilization of his contacts within his local community and university, once more revealing how important established network of connections are for fellow refugees in the place of asylum. Similarly, Ivory Coast refugee Amadou Diallo, living in Lisbon for 11 years, has focused on enhancing the refugee network in Portugal to promote togetherness and mutual support. He currently

¹³⁶ European Commission, *Thirteenth report on relocation and resettlement - COM(2017) 330 final* (13 June 2017), pg.3.

¹³⁷ Patrícia Labandeiro, email to the author, 6 October, 2017.

serves as President of the Association of Support for Immigrants and Refugees in Portugal (APIRP, *Associação de Apoio Imigrantes e Refugiados em Portugal*), founded in 2015. Given that asylum-seekers flee involuntarily and therefore often look to stay connected to their culture and land, Hanne Beirens, Nathan Hughes, Rachel Hek and Neil Spicer argue that network building and connectedness promote a sense of identity, self-esteem and confidence to combat feelings of isolation.¹³⁸ Challinor uses the example of a refugee family living in Vila Verde, Braga: “They were doing well, the father had a job, the children were integrated and it seems that leaving was just a whim of the father. So when we talk about people leaving, there are so many factors to consider besides the quality of the service or concerns about the future, but rather pressures of family reunification and idea that prospects might be better somewhere else under wider networks.”¹³⁹ The effect family dynamics have in the decision-making of refugees has also been argued in Aiwha Ong’s research of Cambodians refugees in the United States in the 1970s, for many families were afflicted with marital conflicts, and most struggled with adjusting to the new country.¹⁴⁰ Familial networks can offer assistance in financial, employment, personal, or health problems.

Mahmoud Zamzom, for example, left his asylum country of Portugal and headed to Germany “because that is where my family and my friends are.”¹⁴¹ He adds that “Portuguese people are nice but there is a problem with organizations, they don’t support us well or have experience.”¹⁴² CPR’s Director Tito de Morais argues that this lies in Portugal’s slow reaction to hosting refugee: “Germany had a great opening at the beginning which favored arrivals.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Aiwha Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003), pg.134.

¹⁴¹ Mahmoud Zamzom, Syrian refugee in Germany, email to the author, 8 October, 2017.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Sweden, Holland and France also received many people at an early stage. As a consequence, those who come to Portugal later have the horizon of going to those countries where they have references (family, friends). We can, and do, inform about the support and benefits they'll find in our country but there is a certain discredit. The predisposed horizon is different and Portugal ends up becoming a country of transit to reach a more enduring future in another European country.”¹⁴³ The absence of a social support system in the form of refugee networks, which asylum-seekers are attracted to in other EU countries, contributes to Portugal's weak exposure and, thereupon, low refugee rates and poor refugee networks.

When discussing refugee abandonments there is more at stake than policies and guidelines: the human aspect of family dynamics and personal ambitions plays a critical role. The Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs acknowledges the importance of ambition in how refugees reach a decision to flee: “In many of these cases there was never really an intention to stay in Portugal, in fact many left the country few days after their arrival. Although this is an irregular choice and is liable to undermine the foundations of a solidarity system under construction at the European level, its motivations are relatively simple and even understandable from the human point of view: to reunite with family or friends, or to try to rebuild a life in a country where there are more job opportunities and higher salaries.”¹⁴⁴ Housing or reception conditions notwithstanding, the act of fleeing is not necessarily an act of protest towards the host institutions, but oftentimes “it has more to do with internal dynamics of the family and their journey.”¹⁴⁵ This factor negatively affects Portugal in that families' ambitions and ideal destinations usually lie in Northern Europe for

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Sara Carvalho Marques, email to the author, 27 June, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Challinor, 2 October, 2017.

purposes of higher wages or reuniting with family and friends. The Salesianos Foundation, for example, had prepared to host receive their first family in September 2016: “We took care of all the diligences from refurbishing the house to buying essential goods, preparing school and medical enrollment and providing Portuguese classes to the parents. We had everything ready but they never arrived, they did not want to come to Portugal. This seems to be common. They have certain expectations and want to go to certain countries for a multitude of reasons.”¹⁴⁶ In contrast, Paula Cristina Baptista is certain that “The families that are here, are here to stay and eventually gain autonomy. In fact the adolescent twins of the second family want to go to university to study architecture.”¹⁴⁷ They have always shown to be committed to integrating and learning the language as their long-term plan.

Just like refugees living in Portugal compare the parallel integration systems, so do refugees living all over the EU compare benefits and opportunities. Cardoso offers insight from the field in pointing out how feedback from family or friends can actually propel secondary movements: “A certain stigma has been created in that everything must be granted to the refugees along with the provision of asylum. This creates expectations, I have talked to refugees who tell me that going to Portugal is not good because they receive a lower monthly allowance than that of other Member States. They do not value the fact that when they go to Portugal, they do not go to a camp but are given a furnished house with all expenses included and are supported throughout the integration process by a designated team.”¹⁴⁸ Akindipe further highlights that “What people don’t seem to understand is that refugees speak to each other. A family in Portugal speaks to its former neighboring family that is now in

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Paula Cristina Baptista, Lisbon, 28 June, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Andreia Cardoso, Athens, 21 June 2017.

Norway. And they might hear how in Norway the children are going to university, having language courses and getting a certain allowance, whereas in Portugal the situation is different.”¹⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, while there are weaknesses in the developing reception conditions and integration strategies in Portugal, the element of the family’s own determination and expectation cannot be denied.

LACK OF FIELD PRESENCE OR LOBBYING EFFORTS

Portugal does not have a big presence in the hotspots in Greece, Italy or the Middle East, which affects the exposure asylum-seekers have to the country. A big presence in the field or improved lobbying efforts could counter some of the negative effects Portugal’s lack of refugee hosting history or removed geographical position bring. Jamal Jalal, a 16 year old Yazidi refugee who spent 18 months at the Skaramangas refugee camps until accepted by Germany in September 2017, is straightforward in explaining that “we know Portugal is a nice country but didn't want to stay because we have friends and relatives in Germany. We didn't know anyone in Portugal except some volunteer friends from Lisbon I met at the camp.”¹⁵⁰ The Portuguese High Commissioner for Migration stresses that “the relative lack of information about our country tied to high expectations on benefits in others EU states explains the unwillingness to come to Portugal.”¹⁵¹ Portugal needs more exposure to increase its appeal.

In March 2017, a successful lobby by the Portuguese government resulted in the relocation from Greece of a group of 24 refugees belonging to the Yazidi religious minority

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Tola Akindipe, 7 September, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Jamal Jalal, Kurdish refugee in Germany, email to the author, 21 September, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Pedro Calado, email to the author, 15 November 2017.

to the Northern city of Guimarães. In the context of the EU relocation scheme, Portugal manifested openness and readiness to host up to “400 people from the Yazidi community and we are preparing, according to the cultural and organizational characteristics of that community, the reception rules that seem most appropriate,” said the Minister Assistant to the Prime Minister. As of October 2017, only one refugee of the group remains in the city, the only that came alone and not in the context of a family¹⁵². Saman Ali lost his entire family in the war and, upon arrival at the airport in Portugal, repeated “I am very happy. I am born today. I feel safe. Thank you for everything.”¹⁵³ In Guimarães alone, of the 43 refugees that have arrived since 2015, 20 have left for other countries.¹⁵⁴

The National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions (*Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade*, CNIS) had a central role in expanding Portuguese lobbying efforts. The institution autonomously proposed developing an intervention model for the reception and integration of unaccompanied and separated children¹⁵⁵ to target children of Afghan or Pakistani origin. These nationalities are not included in the EU relocation scheme but are “the most prevalent nationalities among unaccompanied children in Greece and Italy.”¹⁵⁶ Most noteworthy is the key facilitator role CNIS took on to realize this model: went to Greece in February 2016 to lobby the relocation of unaccompanied children to Portugal

¹⁵² Cláudia Carvalho Silva, “O último refugiado Yazidi em Portugal continua à espera. Mas, desta vez, tem boas notícias” [The last yazidi refugee in Portugal is still waiting. But this time there's good news], Público, 21 May 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2017/05/21/sociedade/noticia/o-ultimo-refugiado-yazidi-em-portugal-continua-a-espera-mas-desta-vez-tem-boas-noticias-1772916#> (accessed 9 October 2017).

¹⁵³ Inês Chaíça, “Primeiro grupo de refugiados yazidis chega a Portugal, ‘uma terra de liberdade’” [First group of yazidi refugees arrive in Portugal, ‘a land of freedom’], Público, 6 March 2017, <https://www.publico.pt/2017/03/06/sociedade/noticia/portugal-e-uma-terra-de-liberdade-primeiro-grupo-de-yazidis-ja-chegou-1764217> <https://www.publico.pt/2017/05/21/sociedade/noticia/o-ultimo-refugiado-yazidi-em-portugal-continua-a-espera-mas-desta-vez-tem-boas-noticias-1772916#> (accessed 9 October 2017).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ CNIS, UASC transfer and planned reception and integration in Portugal, email to author, September 2017.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

amidst the EU scheme and, once it was known the nationalities in question weren't eligible, this new approach was designed. The proposed model for relocation was submitted for the consideration of the Portuguese government and, once approved, developed in close liaison with the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality and in partnership with METAdrasi, a Greek NGO. Ana Rodrigues, legal consultant at CNIS, defines it as “a pioneer initiative of relocating non-accompanied minors from one Member State to another outside of the EU relocation scheme.”¹⁵⁷ The pilot project was materialized in March 2017 with the arrival of five unaccompanied children from Greece to Portugal. The reputation and credibility a country enjoys has proven to be a determinant in refugees' choice of destination country.

Forced migration entails a flight for safety and better opportunities which necessarily involves internal family dynamics, and a priori prospects of family reunification or career. My thesis research shows how, despite inclusive laws, political willingness and civil society hospitality, this has yet to be complemented by a system that guarantees the pre-arrival, reception and integration conditions for refugees to improve retention rates.

¹⁵⁷ Ana Rodrigues, CNIS legal consultant, email to the author, 5 September, 2017.

CONCLUDING REMARKS & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

“The instruments and control devices are certainly more polished in the traditional countries of immigration. But the institutional construction is precisely that, a construction.” - Margarida M.

Marques and João Rosa Valente, 2003.¹⁵⁸

This research has sought to shed light on Portugal’s role as one of the twenty-eight host countries in the European Union in order to understand why it has been suffering from high abandonment rates within the Schengen Area of free movement. Chapter 1 explains Portugal’s standing as refugee transit country in the EU framework. Chapter 2 lays out the Portuguese migration trends and the current reception and integration policies. Finally Chapter 3 illustrates how institutional state failings of material resources or efficient policies have enabled a tendency for abandonment rather than retention or growth of refugee networks in Portugal.

I argue that in Portugal there is a remarkable political solidarity and societal welcome to host refugees, but the formal integration system has not been able to match this motivation. Relevant authorities need further sensitization to the specific needs of refugees as a vulnerable social group, and allocations of social services need to be harmonized among the different integration systems.

A comprehensive analysis was presented by examining the EU framework of how prevalent destination countries contrast from Portugal as a neglected opportunity for asylum. Northern countries provide better established reception and integration policies given a longer and more culturally diverse immigration history, paired with bigger economic

¹⁵⁸ Margarida M. Marques, João Rosa Valente, ‘‘L’intégration des immigrés au Portugal: singularité ou retard?,’’ *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, No.41 (2003), pg.31.

attractiveness. Asylum-seekers inevitably prefer countries which can offer solid job opportunities and already have refugee networks to offer additional support and social connections.

Most importantly, however, the political will to respect human rights and attend to the needs of asylum-seekers and refugees is evident in the Portuguese government. For this reason, in light of recognizable trends and the new data generated through my research, I put forward policy recommendations for how Portugal can address the refugee abandonments and improve its appeal as host country. In consideration of this initial evidence regarding a recent and ongoing topic, I recommend future research on how policies and the interrelated national and regional issues have evolved. I also encourage secondary migration in the EU be the subject of further research.

ESTABLISH A SPECIALIZED DEPARTMENT FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Government order no. 10041-A/2015 on September 3 2015 created the Working Group on the European Agenda on Migration,¹⁵⁹ a multi-agency approach with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), the Institute of Social Security, Institute of Employment and Professional Training, Directorate-General for Health, Directorate-General for Education and High Commissioner for Migration – yet a heavy dependence on outsourced support remains. The role of civil society organizations, volunteer initiatives and the SEF should be merged through the creation of a single specialized agency. This would facilitate the collection of data to assure proper assessment

¹⁵⁹ ‘‘Grupo de Trabalho para a Agenda Europeia da Migração’’ [Working Group for the European Agenda on Migration], European Agenda on Migration, <http://www.refugiados.acm.gov.pt/grupo-de-trabalho-para-a-agenda-europeia-da-migracao/> (accessed 10 October 2017).

of the population and issues at hand. It would also enable clear accountability regarding asylum applications and refugee integration.

This recommendation should be feasible to carry out in order to achieve the desired outcome of improved accountability since support from all political parties is expected. Refugee matters is not a controversial topic in Portugal, and is currently a priority in the Portuguese political agenda.

IMPROVE DIVERSITY IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LOCAL TEAMS

A key aspect in culturally sensitive human rights issues is the broader awareness of those involved. Since Portugal has no long standing experience with refugee inflows, most of the relevant authorities do not have the training or understanding to connect to these vulnerable communities. This requires a change in the way a policy is devised so that it is more effective and conscious toward specific vulnerabilities.

The government as national actor or the municipalities as local actors should provide sensitivity trainings to all those engaged with asylum-seekers and refugees, such as schools or faith institutions set to receive families. An aim at diversity in teams, both on a higher governmental level of the specialized agency and on the local level of municipalities' programs will enable policies based on real information and connections. Important actions involve consulting the diaspora, the migrant and the refugee community, and including foreigners themselves in decision-making, seeing as they offer a different and personal perspective of mechanisms and institutions. Only by encouraging the participation of the welcomed communities in the welcoming community can a space for dialogue and mutual development be created, one that renders Portugal more attractive for asylum.

Such policies have possibly not yet been adopted for the topic of asylum and refugee inflows has never had the national prominence it does now. As numbers of incoming refugees grow, so must the action plans also expand.

BIGGER FIELD PRESENCE AND LOBBYING

In consideration of all the factors amounting to a lack of network and governmental experience that prompts abandonments, an active engagement linking the hotspots to Portugal is critical to enhance the country's exposure as an attractive host to refugees. An example given was the National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions' lobby to realize a pilot project relocating unaccompanied minors from Greece to Portugal. Oftentimes refugees simply are not aware of Portugal as an asylum destination because it is not present as a main European actor in the field. The Government should promote broader awareness of refugee issues, possibly linking the growing domestic presence to the need to help those still in camps.

The possibility of Government-sponsored field operations that engage students, recent graduates and volunteer professionals could be explored. Grants destined for Portuguese journalists or researchers to conduct field work could also be launched in view of promoting great field presence of Portuguese nationals. Realistically, an obstacle to implementing this recommendation is the lack of available funding in Portugal. This obstacle could however be overcome by resorting to European mechanisms or transnational solidarity organizations.

SUSTAIN SOLIDARITY EFFORTS

Most importantly, solidarity efforts and compliance with burden-sharing mechanisms must be sustained in order to counter the abandonment trend rooted in Portugal being a

relatively new asylum destination in the EU. Commitment to humanitarian and EU obligations will also enhance Portugal's standing as a dedicated and chief EU player. Minister Eduardo Cabrita has already flagged how "secondary movements should be analyzed also on a European scale, and Portugal's decision is to maintain and strengthen its effort."¹⁶⁰ Refugee integration is a process that requires time, resolve and strong policy support. Immediate results should not be expected but rather overtime after policies have been able to impact refugee networks and, consequently, the country's appeal.

Taking my research conclusions and recommendations into consideration, such reinforced comprehensive efforts should prioritize access to the education system and the labor market, as well as offerings of regular language classes.

I envision this material being interpreted by national and regional officials alike and used to improve integration policies on issues such as facilitating bureaucratic shortcomings, revising accommodation plans, and expanding partnerships, lobbying and field presence. All the factors serve to connect the disjointed refugee services in Portugal to the ultimate decisions of families to leave the country in search of better prospects.

I believe the cycle of refugee arrivals and integration in Portugal (Chart 6), which translates the present reality of abandonments, can be reversed. If there is sustained commitment and lobbying efforts toward refugee integration, in time more refugees will arrive to better executed reception and integration programs. More arrivals will shape bigger refugee networks and connections in Portugal, which in turn can integrate taskforces to help

¹⁶⁰ "Dois em cada cinco refugiados recolocados por Portugal abandonam o país," [Two in every five relocated refugees in Portugal leave the country], TSF, May 9 2017, <http://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/interior/dois-em-cada-cinco-refugiados-recolocados-por-portugal-abandonam-o-pais-7995135.html> (accessed May 15 2017).

design integration systems and reception policies that are sensitive to the particular vulnerabilities and needs of asylum-seekers. A more practiced and conscious framework will increase the appeal of Portugal as a well-established destination country, prompting more refugees to stay and fewer refugees to leave.

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ANNEX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

1. **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal - Sara Carvalho Marques (Former Secretary of State of European Affairs)**
 - 27 June 2017
 - Via email

2. **Director of the Portuguese Refugee Council (*Conselho para os Refugiados, CPR*) - Teresa Tito de Moraes (Director)**
 - 6 June 2017
 - In-person interview in Lisbon, Portugal

3. **Director of the International Organization for Migration in Portugal - Marta Bronzin (Director)**
 - 6 June 2017
 - In-person interview in Lisbon, Portugal

4. **High Commissioner for Migration in Portugal (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações, ACM) - Pedro Calado (High Commissioner)**
 - 15 November 2017
 - Via email

5. **Global Platform for Syrian Students (*Plataforma Global de Assistência Académica de Emergência a Estudantes Sírios*) - Helena Barroca (Diplomatic advisor to the founder)**
 - 26 August 2017
 - Via email

6. **Pão a Pão Association - Francisca Gorjão Henriques (Co-founder)**
 - 2 May 2017
 - Via skype

7. **Salesianos Foundation (*Escola Salesiana do Estoril*) – Paula Cristina Baptista (Dean)**
 - 28 June 2017

- In-person interview in Lisbon, Portugal
8. **Carcacelos Parish and Community Center (*Centro Comunitário da Paróquia, Carcavelos*) – Zulmira Pechirra (Social worker)**
 - 6 June 2017
 - Via email
 9. **National Confederation of Solidarity Institutions (*Confederação Nacional das Instituições de Solidariedade, CNIS*) - Ana Rodrigues**
 - 5 Setembro 2017
 - Via email
 10. **DESPERTAR psychological and training center – Patrícia Labandeiro (Founder)**
 - 6 October 2017
 - Via email
 11. **Refugees Welcome Portugal – Tola Akindipe (Co-founder)**
 - 7 September 2017
 - Skype interview
 12. **Portuguese scholar expert on Refugees - Cristina Santinho PhD**
 - 18 September 2017
 - Skype interview
 13. **Portuguese scholar expert on Migration- Ana Rita Gil PhD**
 - 12 September 2017
 - Via email
 14. **Sociologist expert in Migration and Refugees - Elizabeth Challinor**
 - 2 October 2017
 - Skype interview

15. **UNHCR Athens - Spyridoula Mikalef (Senior Protection Associate)**
 - 28 June 2017
 - Via email

16. **Drop in the Ocean NGO, Skaramangas Refugee Camp – Andreia Cardoso (Volunteer)**
 - 21 June 2017
 - In-person interview in Athens, Greece

17. **Refugee in Portugal – Mohamad Abou Ras**
 - 19 September 2017
 - Via email

18. **Refugee in Portugal – Francisco Font Bell**
 - 18 October 2017
 - Via email

19. **Refugee in Portugal – Cleyder Rojas**
 - 18 October 2017
 - Via email

20. **Refugee in Portugal – Nasir Ahi**
 - 18 October 2017
 - Via email

21. **Refugee in Portugal – Obai Radwan**
 - 18 October 2017
 - Via email

22. **Refugee in Portugal – Amadou Diallo**
 - 18 October 2017
 - Via email

23. **Refugee in Germany – Jamal Jalal**

- 21 September 2017
- Via Facebook messenger

24. Refugee in Portugal – Mahmoud Zamson

- 8 October 2017
- Via email