



# WILL THE EU SURVIVE THE REFUGEE CRISIS?

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## **SPEAKERS:**

**Stefan Lehne**, visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe

**Valentina Pop**, the EU correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal* in Brussels

**Carola van Rijnsoever**, the permanent representative of the Netherlands to the EU Political and Security Committee

## **MODERATOR:**

**Judy Dempsey**, nonresident senior associate at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of the *Strategic Europe* blog

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**JAN TECHAU:** First of all, a warm welcome to all of you to Carnegie once more and for making the room very, very full. We have learnt now that when you talk about foreign policy, you get a full room, but when you talk about the future of Europe and the internal wheelings and dealings of Europe, then you get an extra-full room. That is a lesson for us.

We, of course, try to pretend to be a foreign policy think-tank for the most part and have really strongly focused on this, but with the refugee crisis, we have now entered new territory. The refugee crisis, at least in my opinion, is one of those topics, perhaps the most striking one, where the internal wheelings and dealings, the internal questions of solidarity of whether the institutions work and whether our kind of model as a whole works is so closely tied to foreign policy performance and foreign policy failure that you can't really separate the two any longer.

We decided to not only focus on the foreign policy implications of the refugee crisis, which we often do on a daily basis, but with this particular paper that we'll be talking about today, we wanted to really cross over and talk about the much bigger pie. The registration numbers for this event have proven us right. We had to turn down an awful lot of people, so all of you who are in the room here at the moment, you have won the lottery; you got a seat.

Thank you very much for being here. I will not talk for too long. I will hand it now over to Judy Dempsey for moderation. I just wanted to encourage all of you to pick up Stefan's paper that he wrote on the topic, either download it or find a hard copy over here. After the event, as always, we will remove this little blue screen over there, at that far end, and then lunch will be served. I hope that many of you will stay and continue the debate.

With this, thanks again to all of you. Thanks to my panellists. Over to Judy who's going to guide you through the proceedings. Thank you, Judy.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you, Jan. Thank you all for coming. I know you're all very, very busy and you're preoccupied with this crisis. I'm going to quickly introduce the panel and explain the process. First of all, we have Stefan Lehne, visiting scholar Carnegie Europe, Austrian, served in the Foreign Ministry, Political Director. I knew him a very long time, and he served with Javier Solana. Stefan's paper – he will explain to you this – it's quite depressing because nothing has changed since he wrote the paper, but that's to be part of the discussion. Stefan will comment on his paper.

Next we have – I'm very pleased, thank you very much, Ambassador, for coming – Carola van Rijnsoever, who is the Permanent Representative of the PSC, the COPS Committee here, for the Netherlands, the EU Political Security Committee. The Dutch ambassador, and it's very timely given that the Netherlands has the presidency, thank you very much. You've been placed into the hot-seat. Let's hope it will all work out for you.

Our third speaker is Valentina Pop, EU correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*. We go back many, many years, when I was based here in Brussels. Nice to see you after such a long time. Just in terms of identity, Valentina's Romanian, so we have an Austrian, a Romanian, and a Dutch, and I'm Irish, and Jan is German. There's a very nice mixture of people here from backgrounds and nationalities. Thank you very much for coming.

Stefan, I would like you to briefly explain or give an account of the main thrust of your paper, why did you write it, and the main thrust of it.

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**STEFAN LEHNE:** Thank you very much. I start, as one should, with a quote by Jean Monnet. He said, Europe will be forged in crisis and will be the sum of solutions adopted in crisis situation. This has turned into some kind of mantra, that the EU always emerges strengthened from crisis. If that's true, that we have always historically [?] choice because we've had crisis, so the EU will be tremendously strengthened in the end of it. Maybe not. I think there are reasons to believe why this is a different sort of crisis.

If you look back, most crises have been crises because of stagnation. An important project got stuck and then there was a lot of tension and aggravation and discussions. After some months or sometimes years, some kind of compromise was forged, and the EU could move forward. This is different. I think for the first time an important achievement of the integration process, Schengen, is under threat. It's being lost, actually, as we speak. That threatens to throw the integration process into reverse. It's not the question of stagnation; it's the question of losing ground, basically.

I was struck by the parallels and also by the differences with the euro crisis. With the euro crisis, Schengen, like the euro, turned out to be a fair-weather project, a construction that is not resilient, that is not able to sustain shocks and bad crisis. The dynamics are quite different in the case of euro.

The failure of the Eurozone, the falling apart of this Eurozone would have been a massive economic catastrophe for everyone. There were tremendous time urgencies. In some European councils you had to have a result before the financial markets opened the next day. In spite of the mood being, basically, anti-deepening and no further integration, a lot of very significant deepening steps were actually done: the stability mechanisms, the banking union, etc, because there was simply no alternative.

With the migration crisis, the dynamics are different. Obviously, also losing Schengen has a huge economic cost. There was a study by Bertelsmann, published this week, that over ten years the cost will amount to €70 billion – tremendous amount. This will come over the long-term. At the beginning, there is some inconvenience, some cost, but everybody can live with that. What needs to be done, the deepening steps, are very difficult politically to sell to your population, basically. This is a different kind of constellation, and therefore it's quite dangerous.

I have looked into the reasons why the EU has done so poorly over the past year, and I'll just very quickly go through some of them. One is that the crisis arrived when the EU was also weakened by the euro crisis. The crisis has produced divisions, has, I think, reduced the solidarity among the member states. When this new crisis struck, we were not in good shape.

Then there was the crisis, a big problem of leadership. I don't think that the leaders of the institutions have established themselves as strong European leaders yet. I was actually quite frustrated by the doom and gloom messages that you get constantly from Mr Tusk and Mr Juncker, this notion that we are in the same situation as at the beginning of the First World War. Mr Tusk said it recently. Mr Juncker said it's the last chance commission and union without union and things like that. That was not a rhetoric that inspired a lot of confidence in the ability of solving this problem.

Initially, I think Mrs Merkel simply continued the leadership role that she had already developed during the euro crisis. Of course, this was never very popular with the member states and proved to be unsustainable because of the specific situation in Germany. When it came to the Ukraine, when it came to the euro crisis, Germany, as the biggest and most powerful and the richest state, is there to offer solidarity to the others. It's a key partner and can shape policies.

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In this crisis, Germany was the victim, the most affected country, with by far the greatest number of refugees. Therefore it demanded solidarity rather than offering it. Plus, Mrs Merkel has been accused by some of the other leaders of Europe of creating the burden that she wanted to share. That, of course, also meant that other countries were not as willing to come along.

That leads me to another main reason why we've done so poorly, and that is the asymmetric impact of the crisis on the member states. For the majority of member states, they have not been affected at all. Those who have been affected have been affected in totally different ways. The countries of first arrival want to overcome the constraints of the Dublin Rules. The transit countries want to pass the burden along as quickly as possible and to deviate it to others. The countries of final destination want to bring the numbers down and ask for solidarity and burden-sharing.

It's hard enough to have solidarity when you face a common challenge, but it's much more difficult if you have completely opposed interests, basically. That's not just the interests, but also the mentalities. The globalised societies of Western Europe, for them it's not shocking if you have 10,000 refugees, whereas for the Central European countries that lived in isolation over decades, this has a totally different salience and is much more difficult to accept for the population.

Then, finally, I think this is one of the key reasons why we've done not well enough. I think the strength of the EU is to subject political issues to technocratic dialogue. You continue as long as it takes until it becomes pretty unclear who wins and who loses and everybody can live with the result. This does not work with an issue that is so burning, so salient and so decisive for the outcome of the next elections.

Therefore, the main crisis management in this crisis, the heads of states and governments, never developed a European approach, a European vision. They all relapsed into a purely national logic. What proved how weak the EU is actually is a public space. The narrative was always fragmented on the national level; there was even no common discourse on this issue at all.

Now, very quickly to my three scenarios; the first scenario is the ever-looser union. The treaty provision is that Cameron fought so hard to get an exception from the ever-closer union. If things continue as they're going right now, he need not have bothered, basically, because we're already in the direction of, basically, becoming less and less integrated.

I don't believe that the EU will dissolve like the Soviet Union or Former Yugoslavia. That is quite unlikely for my mind, because there is sufficient strong economic interest that keeps the whole thing going. I think Madame Le Pen even doesn't want to introduce customs on inter-European trade. There is some kind of resilience there that should not be underestimated.

At the same time, I think there is a risk that the UK membership in the EU could be part of the collateral damage of the refugee crisis. If the referendum in June takes place against the background of the EU falling apart on the refugee crisis, this could be the decisive factor that strengthens the vote in favour of Brexit.

I think what is more likely is that the EU - there is a glue between the member states. Solidarity will get even thinner, and the big projects of the Juncker Commission, for instance, Energy Union, Cyber Market, will get stuck in this process. I think the quality of the implementation of legislation will possibly decline. I think it's a very bad sign if you have legal instruments, like the relocation decision, which is simply not implemented. It's devastating and this also leads to spill-overs in other areas.

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I would think that in the longer-term, the EU, a bit like the League of Nations or the Holy Roman Empire, will still be there, and institutions will be there, etc, but the real music will play elsewhere. Coalitions of the willing, other institution frameworks, it will simply become less and less relevant as a framework.

The second scenario, very quickly, is a mini-Schengen. As I said, losing Schengen is a tremendously costly and counterproductive exercise. I think if the EU, as in the present framework, with 28 Schengen countries and 22 EU members who are part of Schengen, does not get its act together, in my view, it is quite likely that over a time there will be a small group of countries that say we have to save what has to be saved, and we have to move among ourselves.

This was mentioned by some Dutch politicians, I'd say carefully. It was never a full proposal, but it was mentioned sometime in November, then quickly denied and taken back. I do believe if things do not improve, the idea will come back. I think the notion that in order to participate from the benefits of Schengen, you have to abide by the rules and you have to show solidarity. It's a fairly strong argument.

It's inescapable that this will come back if the EU as a whole does not get a grip on the issue. It could be done the same way Schengen was created. Basically, the core could make a treaty among themselves, establish the rules, possibly also establish institutions. I believe this would be very divisive in the European Union. There will be a lot of fighting-back, etc, but I think over time it might stabilise again. It might be just a period where we have to move towards such a situation.

The third option is, of course, the favourite option and at the moment not the most likely one, is that full Schengen can be revived. I think Carola's job is basically to explain how this came to town [?], so I'll be very, very brief. I would just say that I do think it's not rocket science: actually, many of the solutions are already, in a way, sketched out in the Commission proposals and ideas and even some of the decisions that have been taken in 2015.

There is no silver bullet. I think the notion that one, single thing can resolve this problem is quite implausible. I do believe that Mrs Merkel had put too many of her eggs into the Turkish basket, basically. I think now more and more people realise that this is just one level, but they have many other things that have to be done at the same time to bring this process to a control.

I think at the heart there must be some kind of new deal between the countries on the external borders and the countries of final destination. It must be based on regaining control over the external borders through national efforts, but also through this new frontier guard that the Commission has proposed. Then there must be some kind of burden-sharing mechanism.

I think in the longer-term it's, for me, quite unthinkable that without some kind of burden-sharing of refugees, financial but also relocation mechanism, you can have a sustainable solution in the longer-term. You do have to do many things too; I think this idea of bringing the refugees from the third countries directly in a legal way to the EU is also an extremely plausible outcome.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Stefan, thank you for...

**STEFAN LEHNE:** It was too long, I'm sorry.

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**JUDY DEMPSEY:** No, it was needed, actually, to put all these complex issues into perspective. Just a reminder: League of Nations collapsed and so did the Holy Roman Empire. I hope the EU doesn't go the same way.

One point on your mini-Schengen: maybe it is a much smaller version of a smaller, closer union, a much tighter one. Maybe Schäuble might believe this might be a good idea. Since we have many of the Central Europeans here, they can no doubt explain why they won't implement. Valentina, would you want to pick up on what Stefan was saying?

**VALENTINA POP:** Yes, I would like to pick up on his points, especially why I see some problems with the mini-Schengen, and I guess this is also why it was dropped. Who will be in that group? Do you include France, or don't you include France? Austria right now has issues with everybody else. That's why the first point of the ever-looser union, where you would have all sorts of alliances of convenience now and then, is actually a much more plausible scenario than the one where you have a defined corps of countries that absolutely want to do more integration.

At this point, it's hard to see who else, apart from perhaps Belgium and Luxembourg, but not even them, really want... this was evident in the Brexit discussions, the countries who really insisted on ever-closer union, apart from the European Parliament. There were very few, is my point.

What is happening? I see it now as a revival of Maghreb and surrealism. This is what is happening in the European discourse. We've seen it over and over again in the UK debate: presenting things that apparently are contradictory as one. Now the mantra, increasingly, among EU officials seems to be, well, wait a minute, these national solutions are part of the European solution. If countries do their own thing, well, let's just make sure that they are included or that they talk to each other.

There is no more grand EU plan; there is rather an attempt to manage the various national plans and even to do contingency planning for something that last year was seen as the thing to avoid most, a humanitarian crisis, refugee crisis, on EU soil. This is what everybody was avoiding last year and now it seems to be the case that people think, oh, this will actually happen in Greece; let's make sure Greece gets all the money needed and then the help to cope with this, because it's inevitable. How did we get there, and where are we going from here, is what I would like to discuss.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thanks for that, Valentina. It goes very nicely into the whole implementation issue. Just one point: the national plans that you speak of, in fact these are very negative plans. They aren't plans; they are actually plans of resistance. It's all very well talking about that the countries should have a say, but it's not an input.

The implementation has always been the issue since the beginning of this crisis, Carola. You mentioned, Stefan, burden-sharing or relocation, but how on earth is this going to be implemented given the present atmosphere among the 28 countries?

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** I agree with you: implementation is an issue. I'm one of those infamous bureaucrats who are behind the scenes, working on, as you said, technocratic solutions, but we do that definitely with the real world first on our minds.

If I got to choose between the three scenarios – ever-looser, a hard core or a joint way forward – clearly, I would choose for the joint way forward. That's also what the Netherlands, as presidency of the Council of the European Union, together with others, is now really working on to get that done and to get it implemented.

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Definitely, it's a big challenge. It's one of the bigger challenges we have faced since the European Union was founded. I'm still confident that if we want to we will manage, and we definitely want to.

The European Councils of last week and December really clearly set the strategic direction of where to go. Yes, it is a set of measures, but it's not a set of national measures; it's a set of different blocks that we work on internally, within the EU, and externally, beyond our borders. That's the only way to go at this. We need an integrated approach to this crisis. It's a very complex crisis and there's no simple solution to the complex crisis. It has a complex solution based on a number of building-blocks, but that build together a house, hopefully.

Now, in the coming weeks, decisive steps, implementation – that's where we are now and what we really need to work on. Of course we need to do it with all 28 and all in Schengen. Everybody has to be transparent, communicate what it says and respect his legal obligations.

More concretely, we have a legislative agenda: working on a list of safe countries of origin, making sure we move forward quickly, as soon as we can, with the proposals on a European coast and border guard, and also review the Dublin Rules, i.e. the Schengen package, review that so that it continues to work.

Then on top of that, we have to work on the ring around the EU. It's mentioned not often enough when we talk about migration, but it all starts, of course, with finding a solution for the Syria crisis. We always mention we have to address the root causes, and this is, of course, the most important root cause. I'm really hoping that under the lead of staff under Mr Auer [?], the UN Envoy, we can finally move forward in this crisis. For a plethora of reasons, we have to solve it, but one of them is to cope with the migration crisis and the refugee crisis in Europe.

Then, of course, we have to work with the countries that are hosting many refugees, work with Lebanon and Jordan. Their burden is much bigger than the burden on the EU. They have per capita huge numbers of refugees, and we have to help them host them. We're working on what we call compacts, another bureaucratic term, but it's a package of measures, integrated, helping the countries with work, with investments, with capacities to host refugees, etc.

At the same time, we have to fight the smuggling and the trafficking. It's a cynical group of people that profits from the crisis. We have to work with the EU and the countries that are coping with this problem, to really fight the traffickers and the smugglers. Follow-up on the Valletta Summit – it's not so long ago, but we had a big summit in November on Malta with Africa. It's now a bit out of the media, but we are implementing what we agreed. We are working on partnerships, on addressing the root causes of migration there, which are often more economic than political.

Then, of course, there is Turkey. We have an action plan agree towards the end of last year. Here, also, the thing we're working on is to make it work, and as a presidency we're in very close contact with Turkey. In March we will have a summit meeting with Turkey to take steps forward.

Then I would want to mention Greece again as a country that has a huge burden on its plate. Frankly, it's my opinion no single country could cope with such a challenge on its own. Greece needs our help with setting up the hotspots where you register refugees and migrants with its border management and with delivering assistance to migrants.

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This also means that other European countries have to deliver on the commitments they made to make people available for frontiers [?], for example, and to do this relocation that we agreed on last year to get migrants from Greece and from Italy into other European countries. All have to do that. Just a bit of promotion of my own country, the Netherlands has a border security team on Chios, directly assisting Greece in a place where they have a lot of migrants coming in, and helping them to register everyone.

The last point, the Balkans – there is a transit flow through the Balkans, and we have to assist these countries in managing this in an orderly fashion. We don't believe in patchwork solutions or in a race to the bottom where unilateral measures prevail, because as you said, that will not work. It will increase tensions and it will also make the situation worse for the refugees and the migrants. If you get stuck, everywhere it's horrible, I think, if you're there with your family. We have to help the countries in the Balkans to register and to do it properly.

This is the agenda we have, the package of measures we have that builds up to a sound whole of it. The challenge is to implement it properly with all concerned. Only in this integrated fashion where we play on the internal and the external feeds simultaneously, I hope we will be able to cope with it.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much for giving us a tiny, tiny, little bit of optimism about the possibility of implementation. I'm actually very pessimistic about this.

Before I ask Stefan and Valentina to come in, I find the whole problem of the refugees is that, from the perception of those countries that won't welcome them, they are regarded as objects. This is an extraordinary humanitarian crisis. This is about people who've been tortured, who are fleeing, who cannot go back to their homes; they don't have any more homes to go to. It's a truly shocking dimension.

I think, Stefan, you mentioned Jean Monnet, the process, but can you really reconcile a process to the extraordinary humanitarian crisis that is not going to go away, all the more need for a burden-sharing and for every country in the EU to recognise that these are people who are seriously fleeing war? They don't want to flee their homes, but they have no choice.

I was wondering, is this technocratic process idea which is embedded in the regional European community, does it really have an credence now?

**STEFAN LEHNE:** I think you have to differentiate between the short-term and the longer-term perspective. In the short-term, it's pretty evident to me that if the refugee flows continue on the same level as 2015, the EU is done with, basically, because it's politically not sustainable. Of course, we can take another million and 2 million, but the political systems will not survive it.

The refugee crisis is driving the polarisation in the member states, basically. The mainstream parties are losing ground, mostly on the right, but sometimes also the left are gaining ground. The EU – it depends on the coalition between centre left and centre right, for decades, basically. What these groups have in common at the margins, they both hate the EU. The mainstream parties sometimes – and this, unfortunately, happens in my country – are co-opting the policies, some of the policies of the populist right, because they are getting so frightened. Therefore they become more and more restricted.

For me, it's, unfortunately, quite clear: the inflow on that level and the notion that this is out of control, basically, it's happening. It's frightening people so much that this is creating something that is

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not sustainable at all. I think the key objective for the next few months is to bring the numbers down, but in a humanitarian way, acceptable way, which means that you have to make sure that in the countries that are bordering Syria, conditions are such that these people can actually stay for a while.

In the longer-term, and there I really believe you need significant further integration of this area, because the African population will double up to the year 2050. There is a lot of vulnerability in a number of countries. There will be big flows coming. Afghanistan is getting weaker and weaker as a state; more people will be coming. There is no question that Europe will be confronted with millions of people trying to come in. They will come in. It's totally inevitable. Europe cannot become a border.

Whether this process happens in a controlled and managed way, based on collective approaches and legal ways, or whether it happens in a chaotic manner which basically destroys the political structures we have established on the national level and on a European, continental level over decades, that is the question, basically, that will determine the future of the EU and Europe, as such.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** This long-term issue you mention is all the more reason that there now should be a drive for a collective effort to deal with this long-term scenario, and it's not there.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** Yes. To get the numbers down, I think it must be the top priority.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** That goes back to the Syrian war. Valentina, you wanted to come in here.

**VALENTINA POP:** Yes. What the change in discourse is compared to last year, when indeed everybody was focusing on these are refugees, they are people, I think now a lot of people are looking, yes, but the route is also being used by people who are economic migrants, who are not coming from Syria or Iraq, who are coming from Morocco and Algeria. There is this vision that if the route is blocked, if only Syrians and Iraqis have a chance to go further or be relocated and so on, it will also create a deterrent effect to the other nationalities from coming.

Right now, it's pretty easy, in ten days to two weeks, to go from Turkey to Germany. If this is being hampered and blocked, even though it will create a horrible mess in Greece, the logic is, yes, but after a few months, people will realise, oh, there's no point in coming to Greece in the first place, which is quite cynical.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, it is, but there's another issue. Our friend Merkel said, we'll open the doors to Syrians. If you visit Jordan and if you visit Lebanon, you understand the huge price to pay for a Syrian passport. That's another issue people exploit in what was a humanitarian decision by Merkel. I want to go back to this issue. Carola, what happens if Turkey cannot deliver?

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** I think we're on a very clear path with Turkey where we agreed a number of steps between the EU and Turkey to take... we're on a good path of taking steps to implement them, like increasing the capacities in Turkey to host refugees, increasing the possibilities for them to work there, working on the Turkish visa policy, having cooperation with Turkey in the field of fighting smuggling and trafficking. I am confident, and we will talk again at a higher level to Turkey in March, we will be able to make significant steps with Turkey in this field.

**VALENTINA POP:** How come?

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**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** We have come a long way. We have agreed, I think, a good set of steps to take together. Why would we question our joint power together to take those steps? Subsequently...

**VALENTINA POP:** Is it really on Turkey's mind to help us? No matter what we promise them, they seem to be overwhelmed with so many other problems...

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** Precisely.

**VALENTINA POP:** ...the Kurdish issue, the war with Russia...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** What's happening in Syria.

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** I think you should ask Turkey what's on their mind, but so far I have no counter-indications that there is bad will, absolutely not.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Stefan, do you want to come in?

**STEFAN LEHNE:** I think the question is the will and the capacity. The problem is Turkey is having, war situation, basically, in Kurdish areas; it has almost a war situation with Russia, high tensions; it has a difficult economic situation that is declining. It is a question of the bandwidth of the Turkish leadership, with a complicated internal situation, whether they can sufficiently focus on these issues to produce solutions in the short-term. I think there is no alternative but to try to do this.

There is also the question, what we underestimate and which is so evident with Turkey, the question also of prestige, self-worth, a sense of humiliation, that tremendous chip on the shoulders of the leading Turkish politicians who feel that they've been discriminated against by the EU for decades. On the other hand, on the European side, you have a lack of trust in Turkey's ability to deliver. Also, in terms of the psychological dimension, it's very, very difficult to handle.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I'm going to open the floor to lots of questions. Just one thing about Turkey: frankly, yes, Turkey can do more to protect the external border, but outsourcing the problem to Turkey lets off the hook an awful lot of EU member states, actually. That's only a comment.

I'm going to open out the floor. I'm going to take three questions at a time. Identify yourself, and one question only; you'll have a second chance later on. I'm going to take three questions first. If you want to, direct your question at any of the panellists.

**CHRISTOPHE CHRISTIAENS:** Thank you. Christophe Christiaens, British Embassy, but I speak in a personal capacity. Regarding the discussion on mini-Schengen, with the, let's call it an ultimatum to the Greek Government, and also a bit some of the actions from the Austrian Government to push people back into Slovenia, hasn't that already happened? Isn't that already started? Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [inaudible], former Economic Expert in some Arab embassies. If because of refugee crisis, we don't have Schengen, do you have an idea about the economic costs for European Union member states?

**FRANCESCO PAPADI:** Thank you very much. Francesco Papadi from the Bruegel Institute. One explicit premise of your statement, and, I think, implicit in what the other two panellists have said, is that these people are a burden. Is that so? Is that so, at least over the medium- to long-term horizon?

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Are they not also a resource if we are able to integrate them? Europe is getting older and older, the demographics are terrible. Is that not something to put into the picture?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Three important questions: the burden of the integration issue, the economic costs, very important, and mini-Schengen: does it already exist? Carola, would you like to take up any of these ones?

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** Yes, maybe I will take the first question on the mini-Schengen, because you already mentioned that this was linked to Dutch politicians as well. What we are working on is to keep Schengen afloat with all its current member states. We feel that that's what we have to focus our work on, because that will be the best way to go about confronting this challenge.

Coming back a bit to what you also said in your introduction, the whole core of the EU is about confronting challenges together. That, I hope, we can keep in mind also going to this rather challenging issue this year. I would say we focus on a full Schengen. The coming weeks, as I think you indicated, sir, are also critical weeks to show that it's still working, that it's still effective. Of course, the legal agenda we have with the border and coastguard package that was reviewed in the Dublin Regulations will help us to move forward with the whole group.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I hope you're right on this. We've got the burden issue and the economic costs. You mentioned Bertelsmann's study on this...

**STEFAN LEHNE:** The last studies by Bertelsmann, and it has this tremendous figure of 470 billion over ten years, there was an earlier study by a French think-tank that spoke about, I think, 7 billion a year. Nobody knows precisely, but everybody knows it's hugely costly.

**FRANCESCO PAPADI:** Then could you [unclear]?

**VALENTINA POP:** No, for the EU.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** No, for the EU, as such. This is also a very important point that you made, that, of course, most economists believe that a considered amount of immigration is absolutely necessary for the EU to regain its economic growth and also to pay the welfare systems in the longer term.

I think in Germany there have been calculations that they need, theoretically, 400,000 a year to maintain the balance between the working and the non-working population, a huge amount of money. Of course, that presupposes... and I agree with this absolutely, migrants have lots to offer, and they should be seen not just as a burden but also a resource.

Whether they turn into a burden or a resource depends on whether they're successfully integrated and their access to the job market is absolutely key and fundamental. I've seen figures from Scandinavia that it takes seven years for refugees, on average, to enter the job market. That is a very long time. If millions arrive every year, then you have the risk that this is not handled correctly.

What we see at the moment in Austria and Germany is that there are lots of people sitting in camps and doing nothing for months and months. That is not improving their ability to contribute to society. The question is, if it's too much and too suddenly then you create parallel societies, lots of people, very frustrated and angry individuals, who will be a burden in the longer-term. The question is, it has to be handled in the right way.

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What is interesting, of course, is that Europe is the continent that has seen the greatest outward migration, I think, from any continent in the world. I think between the year 1880 and 1910, about 30 million Europeans have moved to the United States. They're now on the receiving end, but for a long time we were on the sending end. Of course, the United States is structurally a society more capable of absorbing immigration than we are.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** It's an important point, and I'd like to hear your views, besides our Bruegel colleague. One forgets that Germany took in over 12 million after World War Two, and, of course, the economic rebirth...

**STEFAN LEHNE:** They were Germans.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** There's still a huge Polish-speaking... of German background that still speak Polish in the western parts of Germany. Of course, many did go back, but many stayed from the Former Yugoslavia, and they did integrate. There have been success stories in Germany and with Sweden...

**STEFAN LEHNE:** Austria too.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Austria as well. Valentina, sorry to keep you waiting.

**VALENTINA POP:** I just wanted to say that, indeed, it's a tremendous addition and it's a plus for society, but, again, the shock of arrival can be tremendous and the capacities of a country can be totally overwhelmed, like what happened in Sweden. When Sweden decided to put up border controls and to, basically, refuse people from coming in was when they had over three months... their Interior Minister said that they had so many unaccompanied minors and families with children arriving that they would have had to set up 1,000 classrooms every week. That's just not feasible. They can't do that.

Of course, then we come back to the issue of sharing the burden equally, but then what if these people don't want to go to some other corners of Europe? You can't also force them to do that either. It's a bit of a catch 22.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** This is the experience, what my Czech friends tell me, that when they did accept refugees in Prague, for instance, as soon as they could, the refugees wanted to go to their own diaspora, mostly Germany, but also they tried to get to England as well. It's very, very complex now. Another set of questions.

**ODA SLETNES:** My name is Oda Sletnes. I'm from Norway, if I may say so. I wanted to have comments from the panel on the issue which concerns me a lot: why have you actually ended up in a situation where there seems to be so much lack of trust in European solutions?

We see that national interest prevails when many of the member states prefer not to send their resources or channel their resources and people through European instruments, but actually nationally think that it is a better solution to staff borders and build fences or deal with the situation at hand without going to Brussels. Why have you ended up in this, where many of these countries that actually are of that opinion are those that have profited maybe the most, both in terms of economic growth and assistance for transformation from Brussels?

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**MIKAYEL ZOLYAN:** Thank you. My name is Mikayel Zolyan. I'm a Carnegie EASI Hurford fellow from Romania. Being from Romania, I want to raise the issue of the Eastern Partnership. Part of the Eastern Partnership programme was about visa facilitation, then liberalisation. Eventually the countries of Eastern Partnership were supposed to become part of the larger European space, at least in terms of people's free movement. Does the whole refugee crisis mean that we have to forget about this perspective, at least in the short-term perspective?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I'm glad you mentioned perspective, if they ever had one. Thank you.

**MARC BENTINCK:** Thank you. My name is Marc Bentinck. I'm a former Dutch diplomat. I'd like to recall one dimension which I think has been absent from our discussion until now; that's the dimension of identity. I believe that the core is basically about identity. We live in the age of identity politics. It seems to me that we must bite that bullet somehow, at a national level and at EU level. Only then will the technocratic approach, which is necessary, fall into place and become less impotent, as it is now. Thank you.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** What do you mean by identity?

**MARC BENTINCK:** Who we are.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** As Europeans or rather as a collection of nation states? In order to frame the question.

**MARC BENTINCK:** Christian, Muslim...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I see – cultural identity.

**MARC BENTINCK:** Yes, absolutely.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I just wanted to make sure I understood. Thank you. I wanted to make sure I understood the context of the question. We have three: Eastern Partnership perspective; clearly, the cultural identity we're talking about; and the trust in the European solution – three very easy questions. Valentina, I think you go first this time. You can take whatever question you'd like.

**VALENTINA POP:** I want to take the trust in the European solution. I think there was a bit of a miscalculation last year, in the first place. Of course, when you look at the Eastern and Central European states and say, well, you benefited from all these structured funds, why don't you take in refugees? I think that we're willing to take in refugees as long as this wasn't seen as some cooked-up solution in Brussels where you have some mathematical formula that divides up people and say, now, you need to take 361 and you need to take this and that. That was when the whole thing broke apart.

This was a strategic mistake from the European Commission, I think, that it didn't go into including getting some understanding of how they would get on board. Just by bullying them, they will just dig their heels in even further, so we are on this collision course. I think what the Dutch presidency is trying to do and then the new concept of building blocks and if you're better at border management, why don't you focus on border management; other people are better at negotiating with Turkey; let's do that; others maybe are willing right now to take in more refugees - to preserve at least the appearance of a union.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Clusters of different interests. Carola, how does that sound?

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**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** I'm happy to hear you refer to the work being done in blocks and being one package. I think I have to agree with you that we will see how the trust among the general public in finding European solutions to crisis has eroded over the past years.

I don't want to go into the why. That's too political maybe for me to comment on. What I would like to comment is that this is a chance for us to regain that trust and to do it right. One of the ways to do that is to deliver on the demands of the population, which is to manage this issue properly for all, both, I think, European citizens and the refugees and the migrants.

If I can answer the question on the Eastern Partnership...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, please.

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** Eastern Partnership, you all know, is a partnership between the European Union and six countries to our east. Again, it's a whole package of measures, but one of the important elements is to work on visa liberalisation. I don't think the work on that is suffering from the current crisis.

The countries concerned have to take steps to be ready to have visa-free travel. With the European Union, the Commission is closely following that and will come up with proposals as soon as the countries concerned are ready to take the next steps. From what I see in my daily work, this work is progressing at the speed that it has to take, depending on the progress the countries concerned make.

These six countries are not deeply into the migration and refugee crisis, so we will just continue work on that. I think you can be confident that it will not suffer from this.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you. I want to deal with the identity question. Stefan, please.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** Yes. I think the Europe permit [?] results are always that very few people have a sense of a European identity. It's more in the minority. I think 90% have a strong national identity. That's not a surprise. It took hundreds of years to develop a German identity, and even longer it will take an Italian identity, etc. You can't expect this process to happen in 70 years of European integration.

The problem that we have at the moment is that because of globalisation, the sense of uncertainty, the sense of threat reinforces the national identity. The refugee crisis is really that it hits you at the very core of your national identity; lots of foreign-looking people with different religion moving in.

Therefore, I think it's so difficult to handle it on the EU level and why it is so natural for each politician to look at it in terms of domestic politics, basically. His survival depends on the fact that the Germans can live with it. The EU has never really involved in a public political space. In a crisis situation, we all relapse into a national context. It's almost inevitable.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** This is a much further debate. Another set of questions.

**AUDIENCE:** My name is Hampforth [?]. I worked in the Culture Secretariat of the European Union. I was involved in the Dublin Convention already in '91. It struck me already by that time that there was hardly any question about burden-sharing. Now, my point is that I think what has to be done now at this moment especially is that refugees, they want to come to Sweden or to England or to Austria or

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Germany, that there's need for common asylum procedures, that they don't last too long, or else they'll ask reception conditions and integration. If this doesn't take place, they will still go to the same places.

My last remark is for the Dutch presidency. I hope that the Ukraine referendum will go okay, because that is an explosive under the Dutch presidency.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much for bringing up Ukraine.

**MOHAMED-RAJA'I BARAKAT:** You spoke about people who are coming from Algeria and Morocco. The control of borders is very difficult. Even if you have a lot of controls, you will have many people who are coming and nobody will know from where they come. If you go to [unclear] segments here you can find many illegals and you can't control. Thank you.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much for this. All the more reason for proper frontiers.

**KAROLY BANAI:** Thank you very much. Karoly Banai, I'm a former Hungarian PSC Ambassador. I'm not working for the Government any more. The distinguished ambassador said at the beginning of her statement that if there is a will there is a way. My question is how can we create that common will? What carrots and sticks do we have? Do we need carrot or stick?

I believe that this excellent piece of document which Stefan has prepared is a carrot.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** I meant it as a stick!

**KARL IBANIA:** Some believe in our region that that's a stick, exactly.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** We may go back to the stick issue. Thank you very, Karl.

**AUDIENCE:** My name is Sevelina [?]. I'm a journalist working for Devex. I would like to concentrate a little bit about what you already said before about the integration of refugees in the countries within the European Union. Is it only up to the governments to try to integrate, like Stefan said before, seven years in Scandinavia, or should we put pressure on the European Union and international organisations and NGOs in order to integrate them better and faster?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** That's a very important question. Four questions: integration of the refugees, very important; will or way, as Karoly Banai asks; border controls – I don't know if we've asked it now; and a common asylum procedure. We'll try to speed up this because there are many, many questions out there. Stefan, which one would you like, or none?

**STEFAN LEHNE:** Maybe the question of carrots and sticks. The problem at the moment, I do think in the longer term you need a burden-sharing mechanism in which every country that benefits from Schengen has to share. We are not there at the moment, and I think the Visegrád countries take very strong positions, basically, that they are not willing to...

I, personally, think that it will be a combination of carrots and sticks. I think the risk of a mini-Schengen eventually emerging if this cannot be handled in the longer term is probably the strongest incentive for these countries to come on board. It has to be handled in a correct way, in a diplomatic way. I think, ultimately, for me, it's inconceivable that the burden rests with quite a few countries,

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whereas every other country continues to benefit from the system. I think this basic unfairness has to be removed.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes. Thanks, Stefan. The fact that you mention the lack of a common asylum policy just confirms Stefan's paper, actually, unfortunately. We had the issue of integration, which is very important. It's quite clear the borders are very difficult. Integration and the role of NGOs – I have my own views of integration. Please, I'm the moderator. Valentina, would you like to...?

**VALENTINA POP:** Where to begin? I think, first of all, for Germany, what happened over the New Year, the Cologne incidents, were exactly what shouldn't ever have happened. For Ms Merkel's policy of accepting and looking in the long-term, looking at exactly, well, we can integrate these people and they will be helpful for our economy, we need workforce and so on, was a stark reminder of what difficulties lie ahead in terms of cultural clash.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, but, unfortunately, the Cologne events have been equated with the refugees coming from Iraq and Syria. The women that were assaulted...

**MOHAMED-RAJA'I BARAKAT:** There were no Syrians.

**VALENTINA POP:** No.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** ...they were assaulted by North Africans. That's a story of the authorities turning a blind eye to what had been happening at Cologne over several years. I think the issue of integration – I think you're getting at something different, actually.

**SEVELINA:** I would like to know actually what is the role of the international organisations and European Union [?] in order to help the governments to integrate, like looking for a job or getting education or making [overtalking].

**VALENTINA POP:** I think they're doing a lot in Germany. [Inaudible]

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** It's extraordinary – I live in Berlin, and I cannot tell you, really, I cannot enumerate the number of thousands of voluntary organisations and individuals helping every single day, and, thankfully, the State is out of the way. They're teaching them German, they're bringing them to the dentist, they're interpreting, they're translating... The schools, of course, under the aegis of the various city authorities, are taking in children and making big efforts to integrate them.

It's going to be very long-term policy because Europe is very bad at integrating. Whether or not you bring in another bureaucratic level of NGOs and others, we don't want a competition between NGOs either, but what is needed is clear, long-term policy of integration. Next round of questions.

**ZOLTÁN NAGY:** Thank you very much. My name is Zoltán Nagy; I'm the current Hungarian Ambassador to Belgium, the Bilateral Ambassador. I do work for the Government, but don't be afraid, anyway!

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** A shy one [?].

**ZOLTÁN NAGY:** A very simple question: how do you see the relationship between the public opinion's view on the migration crisis, the overwhelming view in the press, and what are political elites representing? How do you think the synch between these three...? Thank you very much.

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**SUSANNE HÖHN:** My name is Susanne Höhn from the Goethe-Institut here in Brussels. I do have a question, because you were talking about the polarisation, and I have a feeling that your only measure against polarisation was to reduce the influx of refugees. I was wondering if there were more options to reduce polarisation in the societies?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** That's a really interesting question.

**AUDIENCE:** Hi, my name is [inaudible]. I'm actually in training at the European Commission, but also I'm a language teacher as well, in addition to that. My question is, basically, do you think policy in the end is what we need, a common European policy or do you think we can do everything?

We actually organised an event two days ago on this exact topic, and we heard good success stories of Dutch mayors integrating refugees, a Slovenian mayor who was himself of African origin, who did a great job as well. On a local level, there are communities that are doing very much. What are your opinions? Do you think need common European policy, national policy, or are local governments in each country enough to deal with this?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** A common European policy – to do with what, specifically?

**AUDIENCE:** Basically, one rule which would apply to all member states.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** One rule in terms of sharing out the refugees, or...?

**AUDIENCE:** Yes, I mean burden-sharing. Basically, my point of view is what is the best solution to the refugee crisis? Is it, A, European-level policy; B, national-level policy; or, C, local communities, NGOs, what she was mentioning earlier on as well.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much.

**ALEXANDRE BEDDOCK:** Alex [unclear] from the European Youth Forum. I listened carefully to what Carola said at the beginning, and I really believe there is lots being done right now to address the crisis and also the multiplication of all the summits. There is one question that strikes me: why so late? Is there nothing that we could have anticipated? We have many signs. The premise of Syrian war is not from yesterday, with Turkey and Lebanon taking load upon load of refugees. Is it not really late? Does this not show lack of political willingness?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much. We were discussing this just before we assembled here. The writing was on the wall two, three years ago. To repeat the four questions: out of synch; how to reduce the polarisation, very important question; common European policy on the national level, or NGOs; and then why so late? This is a pick-and-choose; this isn't even a mini-Schengen.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** On the polarisation, because that was directed to me, I think the polarisation happens for many reasons. I think part of it is then outcome of the economic crisis; it has to do with globalisation. Government cannot deliver on their campaign promises any more because decisions are out of their hands. It has a lot to do with inequality, since large parts of the population are losing out, they have little perspective. It has to be dealt with on all those levels.

In many countries, in my own, there's a clear case, xenophobia is the fear of refugees, is probably the most potent instrument by these parties to be exploited to get broader traction in overall society.

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Therefore, I do think that unless the sense that this process is out of control and these people are coming, this fear... in some parts of Austria, people are starting to buy weapons. This is totally crazy.

This lack of control, I think is the most traumatic aspect of the whole thing. If lots of people are coming in, but this is a somewhat organised process that is handled by the institutions, by civil society, etc, in an overall correct way, these fears will go away. The sense in Austria – I think it happens three times in the summer – that thousands of refugees just overwhelmed the police and streamed across the border, I think that was the moment when something in society just broke, basically.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Valentina.

**VALENTINA POP:** On that, I'm wondering if this was not also the novelty of the phenomenon. Up until now, last year, in countries like Croatia, suddenly, from one day to another, they had thousands of people coming in, and, of course, people had fears of: who are all these people? I'm wondering if the politics of fear, in a way, can last.

Certainly, at one point people will also realise, well, wait a minute, these are people like you and me; why do we have to respond with such a fearful reaction to this? The hope is, at least, the more these messages of difference and xenophobia will also disappear. Also, maybe people will realise these are no solutions in the end, because people come anyway.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Carola, why so late, which you touched on in some ways, but I'd like to hear what you feel?

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** Yes, thank you for your question. I think it's a very fair point. Next month it will be five years since the fighting in Syria broke out, and we could have seen it coming, maybe not in this measure, but we could have seen the risk. It's a question that we ask ourselves as well: why don't we anticipate more and take action earlier?

The European External Action Services, the service working for the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, for Mrs Mogherini, is actually setting up a system where we have more knowledge, an early warning system where we earlier in the track see what's going to happen, when we earlier see like, hey, Burundi's getting out of control, or, hey, the Central African Republic is getting into trouble, and take action.

The point is I think that it's difficult for politicians and public to take the right steps before things happen. That is a difficulty that we have to cope with. We just have to make sure that once a thing happens we act as quickly as we can, that we are prepared, and that, hopefully, we see things coming and act quicker in the future.

I wanted to reply quickly to the two Hungarian questions. Sir, you asked about carrot and sticks. I think there is a third thing, which is conviction, to convince your partner. Whenever you're in negotiation training, what you learn is a policy or a compromise holds not when you force your partner into it but when he or she is convinced that you have to go down that way. I'd suggest you get together afterwards and you convince each other of the way forward.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, we haven't quite dealt with your answer, but maybe touched on it...

**AUDIENCE:** Actually, it wasn't really questions. Basically, I wanted to give an example of how there is a lot you can do at the local level, because there are towns, cities... Just an example: I'm working in

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climate right now, and at the Mayors Adapt mitigation where different mayors of Europe basically get together and find common solutions and stuff...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, it doesn't work.

**AUDIENCE:** Essentially, I think this is a communication issue. I think we can actually find solutions to the crisis. I think there is a way...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** It's important, what you say on this, because maybe one of the big problems of this shocking crisis is the lack of communication or unilateral decisions or member states being told what to do. Another round of questions, please?

**FRANCA VAN DER LAAN:** Thank you. I'm Franca van der Laan from The Hague Clingendael Institute. I was wondering, thinking about this early warning system Mrs Mogherini is installing, is at any level in the EU anybody dealing with Mr Lehne's worst-case scenario? We are all putting our balls on, of course, trying to solve the European Union and to realise the best case scenario. I was wondering what will the worst case scenario mean for the EU or member states or then maybe individual countries to deal with this still existing refugee crisis?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Thank you very much.

**FRANCESCO PAPADI:** Francesco Papadi from Bruegel. Burden or no burden: I think that it's very important and it came clearly from your intervention what you tell to the public opinion. If you tell to the public opinion, you have to make a gift to these people. These people are a burden, you have to show solidarity, you have to make a gift to them. It's much more difficult than to say you have to make an investment. That is, I think, the right narrative.

Of course, you would not win Madame Le Pen, but more reasonable people can understand this kind of reasoning. If you start with a burden, you're in a losing argument.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** This is a very important point. This is why the established parties must engage parties like the National Front and other far right-wing parties. We are demonising them, and the more we demonise them the more we give the supporters the legitimacy that... as if we know best. This goes back to the whole communication, and I think, Carola, you mentioned conviction. If you believe in something you really have to defend it and explain and get out there and explain to the member states. The best case scenario – we should have left that to the end.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** The worst case scenario doesn't have to be prepared; that happens by itself if we fail in dealing with these issues. I think what also needs to be communicated, for me, it's just totally implausible that if every single state tries to close its border, tries to handle this issue by itself, by going back to the 1950s, basically, in terms of sovereign exercise of power, that the overall result will be acceptable.

I think it's blatant; I think millions of people are going to come, Europe will change tremendously, in many positive ways, but also with huge problems; I think both things will be there. I think it's so evident to everyone who thinks it through that individual steps by Hungary or Austria or Sweden will never produce overall accepted results. We cannot go there. Globalisation has meant that we cannot go back to the 50s, for many patent reasons.

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In the longer-term, the case for handling this collectively is, I think, totally clear-cut. The question is whether we first have to fail really badly before we finally get there together.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Your issue of the investment vis-à-vis the burden, this is a crucial selling point, I suppose, but on the other hand feeds into Stefan's description that this refugee... it's not a crisis. The refugee era is here to stay, in some ways. We haven't even yet seen the impact of climate change on the Sahel.

Nobody's mentioned in any way the role of Angela Merkel. It'd be very interesting if anybody has any questions or want to raise whether her unilateral decision was wise or whether there's now such a backlash against her. The big question is the Visegrád countries and other countries getting their own back on Germany because it led over the Ukraine crisis, Russia, euro crisis, and so Merkel got the solidarity for all of this.

When it comes to the refugee issue, because she welcomed the refugees, the other countries said, well, sorry, this is your problem now, and she isn't getting the solidarity she expected. Isn't this terribly damaging for the whole idea of the solidarity ethos of the EU? This is one of the bedrocks of the EU?

**STEFAN LEHNE:** You had this alliance of the willing of about 11 countries that had a whole series of meetings, sometimes also with Turkey. I think now it's called the alliance of the unwilling, basically, because Mrs Merkel lost one ally after the other. The Swedes introduced border controls; Austria is now doing its own Balkan strategy. Unfortunately, as a European leader, you need followers. At the moment, I think the problem is that Merkel doesn't have followers.

Unfortunately, and for me that is very frustrating, is that the European institutions that are supposed to give the givers of impulses, the leaders, etc, are really failing on this issue. It's not surprising, to some extent, because in the area of Home Affairs and Justice most of the competences are still with the member states. There is not enough of a firmer key [?], and the Commission is not as strong as it is on trade policy.

I think what's probably always the wrong idea, that this could be managed under a German lead, even without the French support, basically, that would never happen. What we've seen over the months is that Germany has become weaker and weaker on this issue, unfortunately.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Carola, yes, please.

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** Just very briefly, to add to that, I would not want to over-dramatise what is said about Mrs Merkel. There is from the European Councils, where she participates, a clear agreement on what we're going to do, and she had regional elections soon. She's under attack because it's almost elections. I think that's part of the explanation why the attack is so strong, that this is an election debate. Hopefully, the debate will lead to an election result, and then...

**VALENTINA POP:** Afterwards, you mean it will be better, after the election?

**CAROLA VAN RIJNSOEVER:** It's part of the discourse in Germany that you would normally have in the run-up to elections.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** I wasn't really getting at that. She's beleaguered by her own party and the Christian Social Union, but I was actually getting at how the member states see her and how they've criticised her and how they have, in some ways, demonised here. There've been pretty nasty

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caricatures coming out of the Polish press. Remember how the Hungarian press has been covering Germany and Merkel, particularly. Remember the Greek press, how they covered Merkel and Schäuble during the euro crisis.

There is this – it's not even residual – there's this open resentment now of Merkel. It's not the Germans... That's my impression, living in Berlin, and I see that Mrs Merkel is more and more beleaguered and essentially alone at the top. I don't know if this is the impression of anybody here. It's not a particularly pleasant situation, particularly since Germany supported EU enlargement for the Visegrád countries and all the other countries in the region. Now she's getting very... there's some sort of payback time. It's very strange.

**STEFAN LEHNE:** Very briefly, I think the German hegemonic moment happened during the euro crisis when it was the ultimate backstop and guarantor of the euro surviving. This was always a bad system. It created a lot of anger and frustration in some of the southern countries, the debtor countries. It weakened the institutions. I think it probably damaged the German-French relationship too. It's not normal for Europe to be led by one country.

At the beginning of the refugee crisis, this carried over, because she has established herself as such a strong leader in the European Council. As I said, because of the asymmetric situation that now Germany asked for solidarity rather than offering it, she was much weaker in getting everyone to follow these lines.

I do firmly believe that Germany will not solve this crisis. We have to have a stronger group of countries; you have to revive the German-French relationship to develop sustainable solutions. It cannot be left to one.

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** Yes, but that's not until 2017, and heaven knows what happens then.

**VALENTINA POP:** Then, if I may add, the European Commission, who should be the proponent of all these ideas on how to solve various issues, including the migration crisis, the Commission has been strongly German-led, influenced. I don't think Ms Merkel could have wished for a stronger ally than Mr Juncker, but, unfortunately, he has not gathered the support of the others. Then the question is, shouldn't the Commission also come up with its own ideas maybe that are not so German-centred?

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** About the Polish situation [?], yes, we have a problem with Donald Tusk as well. Merkel and himself got on very well, and then Tusk did a 180° turn. It's been very, very difficult, but this is what power and politics is, unfortunately, about. A quick intervention, very quickly, and then we're going to wrap it up.

**AUDIENCE:** About Merkel and the refugees, I think it was six months ago, many economic responsables in Germany said that they need 6 million refugees. Mrs Malmström, when she was Commissioner on Internal Affairs, said she accepts neither side, that we need in Europe 20 million workers during the next 20 years. The contradictions...

**JUDY DEMPSEY:** It's all about a synch... It goes back to our Hungarian question. We've touched on all the burdens and investments. We still haven't resolved the problem of implementation. This has been a very, very lively discussion.

I want to thank particularly Carola van Rijnsoever for coming here and being willing to give the Dutch presentation. Valentina Pop, I know you have to go, you're rushing back, thank you very, very much

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for coming, and Stefan Lehne, who gave a fantastically succinct presentation of a highly-complex issue. His paper's there or you can download it on the website. Thank you very much. A great audience, thank you very much.