



PARIS, BERLIN, ANKARA: A DEAL DRIVEN BY POPULISM

IED Research Project: “Migration, borders control and solidarity: Schengen at stake?”

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Abstract: This paper analyses the practical consequences of an agenda driven by the populist rhetoric while looking at the reasons for adopting the EU-Turkey deal. The study departs from the Paris attacks, examining the Islamic State’s strategy of linking migration with terrorism. Building on the intergovernmentalist theory and the principal-agent model, it then explores how that strategy helped fuel the populist speech of far-right parties across Europe, and specifically in Germany, arguing that populism forced Angela Merkel to advocate for the deal with Turkey at the European level as a way to conceal criticism at home. Finally, based on Europol’s expertise, it explains that the deal is not disrupting the business model of smugglers, which find alternative routes to sneak desperate people into Europe. Consequently, the EU-Turkey deal does not target the smugglers, as it claims, but the migrants themselves and especially those using the Eastern Mediterranean route. Based on this realisation, the paper suggests political actions to deal with terrorism, populism and migration.

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1. Introduction

On 18 March 2016, Heads of State and Government of the 28 member states (MS) composing the European Union (EU) ratified, in a European Council (EC) meeting in Brussels, a controversial agreement with Turkey according to which every migrant arriving illegally to the Greek shores would be immediately returned to Turkey. In exchange, the EU committed itself to receive one migrant through legal channels for every other returned to Turkey, in what is known as the “one for one” system. However, the agreement also included some other points which make it look quite advantageous for Turkey. Among other concessions, the EU pledged to deliver €3 billion extra until 2018, visa liberalisation for Turks already in June, overture of new chapters for the Turkish accession to the EU, etc. This polemic agreement has one main goal, according to the statement¹ released by the parts after its adoption: to deter illegal migration by destroying the business model of migrant smugglers. Migrant smuggling has become the fastest growing crime in Europe, with annual revenue of €3-6 billion for organised crime groups that facilitate illegal migration, according to Europol². Therefore, politicians have rightly targeted it as a priority to start managing the migration crisis that currently holds the Schengen area to ransom. But why did MS choose to sign this contentious agreement? What led Germany, its major advocate, to fight so ferociously for the deal with Turkey, changing its approach towards migration? To what extent has populism contributed to it? Is this the solution to facilitated illegal migration? Will this deal restore Schengen?

¹ EU & Turkey. (2016, March 18). *Colisium*. Retrieved from <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>.

² Europol. (2016). *Migrant smuggling in the EU*. The Hague: Europol, p. 2.

This paper analyses the practical consequences of an agenda driven by the populist rhetoric. It will look at the reasons for adopting the EU-Turkey deal on migration and find out why MS gathered at the EC chose to sign this costly agreement, which places an important part of the management of the crisis in the hands of Turkey. The paper will also explore to what extent the deal really fulfils its major objective of bringing the migrant smuggling business to an end. Based on these preliminary questions and through the arguments that will be exposed here, the present study will hold that the EU-Turkey deal does not target the smugglers, as it claims, but the migrants themselves and especially those using the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece, and from there going across the Western Balkans to reach countries such as Germany. Finally, this article will seek an answer to what can be done to manage the migration crisis in a proper way, to restore the Schengen area and to reduce the impact of populism in the decision-making process.

In order to do so, the study will be divided into three parts. The first part will explore the role of populism and its current influence in the decision-makers at both national and European level. It will depart from the Paris attacks, examining the Islamic State's (IS) strategy of linking migration and terrorism. It will then explore the repercussion of that strategy in the public opinion, which helped fuel the populist speech of far-right parties across Europe, and specifically in Germany. It will be argued here that Berlin suffered the growing pressure of anti-migration views which conversely made Angela Merkel's government alter its initial approach towards the migrants, although in an indirect way. This has eventually resulted in the signature of the current agreement thanks to Germany's insistence. This fact will be studied through the prism of the intergovernmentalist theory to maintain that Merkel (among other governments under similar situations) used the EU to sign this agreement in hope that it will ease the flow of irregular migrants arriving in Germany and help her handle the populist pressure that her government is facing.

The second part of this paper will focus on the future development of the deal. In order to evaluate the appropriateness of the measures it comprises as well as its future results, this part will use the principal-agent model. According to this model, Europol is the agent used by its principals – the MS at the EC and Council – to face the migratory crisis. Based on an analysis of the reports, threat assessments and opinions produced by this agency, the main argument will maintain that rather than utilising the intelligence and expertise offered by their agent, and driven by the push of populism at the national level, MS prefer the suboptimal

short-term solution of outsourcing the management of the problem, in search of national breathing space. To reinforce the analysis, an interview with a Europol expert will be included in this part.

On the basis of the former study, the third part of the paper will propose political lines and strategies to be followed at national and EU level in order to find efficient solutions to the matters that will be discussed along this article, namely: the impact of terrorist attacks in our societies, the rise of populism and the migratory crisis. Regarding the latter, it will suggest a truly European approach, which includes the revision of the Dublin system (already in the Commission's agenda). To conclude, this paper will gather the main arguments exposed throughout it in order to give an answer to the questions that have guided the study. The conclusion will intend to demonstrate that the terrorist attacks in Paris reinforced the populist trend that Europe was undergoing since the beginning of the migratory crisis and had an impact on the decision-makers which, in turn, led to the signature of the EU-Turkey deal so the inflow of migrants arriving in countries such as Germany could be reduced.

2. Domino effect: The relation Paris – Populism – EU-Turkey Deal

2.1. Paris and the invented link between migration and terrorism

The first part of this chapter looks at the relation between terrorism and migration, which in view of many was reinforced by what happened on 13 November 2015 in Paris. It attempts to demonstrate that the IS intended to create a general state of fear, and to turn that fear into anger and rejection towards the migrants and asylum seekers coming to Europe.

There is no single definition of terrorism among academics, but there is general consensus on the fact that terrorism seeks to cause a social or political reaction inspired by fear. Fernando Reinares³ defines terrorism as 'a set of violent actions that generate, in a given group of people, disproportionate psychological effects regarding its material consequences, and aims to influence the attitudes of that social group and guide their behaviour in a certain direction' (author's translation). Among all possible descriptions of what terrorism encompasses, Reinares' approach is particularly useful to understand the impact of the recent terrorist attacks carried out by the IS in European soil, for two reasons. First, Reinares

³ Reinares, F. (1998). *Terrorismo y Antiterrorismo*. Barcelona: Paidós, p. 15-16.

highlights the ‘psychological effects’ tied to any terrorist act which are often greater than its material consequences. Secondly, those psychological effects, normally based on fear, are oriented by terrorists in order to ‘influence the attitudes of that social group and guide their behaviour’. For this purpose, the targets of the attacks often have either a symbolic nature, from political to religious, or an indiscriminate one, which focuses on common citizens with the aim of blaming an entire society⁴. The latter is the choice made by the IS in its two more recent attacks in Paris and Brussels, especially in Paris, where part of the attempt consisted in random shootings in restaurants, in what is known as ‘special forces’ or ‘Mumbai-style’ attacks. Moreover, precisely with the intention of creating these disproportionate psychological effects and influencing the behaviour of a given society, another conclusion can be deduced from Reinares’ definition: the high communicative dimension of terrorism. Through their actions, terrorists seek to generate excessive media attention, extraordinary governmental measures or exaggerated social concern⁵. In the case of Paris and Brussels, IS deliberately sought something more concrete: to link terrorism and migration before the eyes of the Europeans.

Already in 2013, the annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Assessment Report (TE-SAT) produced by Europol advised of the risk of islamophobia among groups of right-wing extremist in the belief that ‘increasing immigration and the alleged growth of Islam in Europe were threats to national culture and values’⁶. However, despite analysing the risk of foreign terrorist fighters (FF), the TE-SAT 2013 stated that ‘there was no concrete evidence of plans for any attacks against the EU’⁷ by those FF at the time. Throughout the subsequent years, the trend of islamophobia remained present whilst the risk of attacks evolved. The TE-SAT 2015 already alerted that ‘the increasing number of travellers and returnees represents a significant threat to security’⁸ in the EU. The rising anti-Islamic sentiments of a growing sector of the population, combined with an increasing perception of the risk of terrorist attacks perpetrated by FF, made for the perfect basis for a IS strategy to link terrorism with the migratory crisis and influence the minds of the Europeans.

⁴ Torres, M., & Jordán, J. (2013). Terrorismo. In J. Jordán (coord.), *Manual de Estudios Estratégicos y Seguridad Internacional*. Madrid: Plaza y Valdés, p. 309.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Europol. (2013). TE-SAT 2013. The Netherlands: Van Deventer, p. 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁸ Europol. (2015). TE-SAT 2015. The Hague: Europol, p. 22.

Bearing this in mind it is very probable that, with the intention of exploding the potential of the growing feelings of rejection to migrants and refugees in Europe, IS sought to explore an infrequent route to sneak FF into the EU. Until the Paris attacks, there was little evidence that IS terrorists were using the migratory flow to reach the continent⁹, despite the emergent populist speech suggesting so. Turkey was and remains to be ‘the main transit hub for travel to and from Syria and Iraq’¹⁰. Travellers often arrive in the country via direct and indirect plane connections as well as land or sea routes – ferry –, before crossing the border with Syria by bus, and follow a similar route to return to Europe¹¹. Nevertheless, for Paris, IS probably decided to risk more and send two of the attackers disguised as irregular migrants¹².

This decision is indeed risky according to the difficult journeys that at least one of them had to go through in order to play his role of refugee. However, it had a clear pay-off when the rumour spread in the press that a Syrian passport had been found near the body of one of the suicide bombers of the Stade de France, thus sparking concerns over the implication of refugees in the attacks. As it was confirmed thereafter, the fingerprints of the attacker matched those registered in Leros under the identity of the person in the passport.

The alleged migrant disembarked on the Greek isle on 3 October 2015, after his boat from Turkey was about to sink, to begin his way northward through the popular Western Balkan route¹³. All this unusual efforts to reach Paris with the migratory flow, including the dangerous sea journey from Turkey to Greece, would have made no sense if they were not part of the strategy of planting a Syrian passport in the crime scene. When the authorities actually confirmed that the passport was fake and that all of the participants were EU nationals, it was too late and the confusion and fears among Europeans were already alight. In addition, the fact that the Belgian police found another fake Syrian passport during the Brussels raids to catch Salah Abdeslam¹⁴ indicates that the utilisation of this kind of

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.

¹² Europol. Migrant smuggling in the EU. *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹³ Anthony, F. (2015, November 18). *The mystery surrounding the Paris bomber with a fake Syrian passport*. Retrieved April 17, 2016, from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/the-mystery-surrounding-the-paris-bomber-with-a-fake-syrian-passport/2015/11/17/88adf3f4-8d53-11e5-934c-a369c80822c2_story.html.

¹⁴ Dearden, L. (2016, March 19). *Salah Abdeslam: Suspicious pizza order 'led police to Paris attacker's hideout' at Molenbeek flat*. Retrieved April 18, 2016, from The Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/salah-abdeslam-isis-suspicious-pizza-order-led-police-to-paris-attackers-hideout-at-molenbeek-flat-a6941111.html>.

document is no accident. When asked about this possible IS strategy in an interview for this article, Álvaro Rodríguez Gaya¹⁵, senior specialist at the European Migrant Smuggling Centre of Europol, said ‘I don’t believe in coincidences’. Pointing out that the police investigation was still ongoing, he recalled that IS had already threatened with sending 500,000 migrants to Europe in February 2015, which reinforces the possibility that the Syrian passport was actually planted as part of that strategy of fear.

For the IS, the idea of turning Europe against refugees is doubly interesting. Firstly, by creating the impression that every migrant or refugee is or might become a potential terrorist, it confers the group an unreal exaggerated power by seeming capable of infiltrating militants at will and potentially be present everywhere in Europe – thus altering our social behaviour and creating disproportionate psychological reactions. Secondly, by creating among Europeans that anger and rejection towards refugees, the latter feel that they are not welcomed in Europe and that their only solution is to remain in Syria under the protection of the Islamic caliphate, which is in the end one of the ultimate goals of the IS.

In spite of this, the reality after the Paris and Brussels attacks continues to be that ‘there is no concrete evidence that terrorist travellers systematically use the flow of refugees to enter Europe unnoticed’¹⁶, according to Europol. The alleged link between terrorism and migration is therefore false. Migrants and refugees fleeing from war zones are not terrorists. FF might occasionally want to use the flow of migrants to travel to/from Syria and other zones under the IS control, but as Europol points out, this is far from being a systematic trend due to the hazard level that such routes involve. It is also worth mentioning that the other Paris and Brussels attackers used the typical aerial and land means to arrive in and leave from Syria. As a consequence, it is not unreasonable to think that the presence of the fake Syrian passport in the surroundings of the Stade de France was indeed a planned part of the attacks, seeking to link migration and terrorism and to turn fear into rejection.

2.2. The populist revenue from the attacks

Unfortunately, after the Paris attacks, there were many at national level that utilised the tragic events of 13 November to obtain political revenue through populist messages. The

¹⁵ Rodríguez Gaya, Á. (2016, May 26). Interview with a senior specialist at the EMSC of Europol. (J. Ferro Rodríguez, Interviewer).

¹⁶ Europol. (2016). *Changes in modus operandi of Islamic State terrorist attacks*. The Hague: Europol, p. 3.

anger towards migrants provoked in Paris was rapidly translated into hate all around Europe thanks to opportunist narratives that echoed the alleged liaison. Populist anti-migration speeches were already there before the attacks, but these undoubtedly contributed to fan the flames of hatred.

To begin with, right after the Paris attacks the newly elected rightwing government of Poland, in the hands of the Law and Justice Party, did not hesitate to use those events to put terrorism in close connection with migration and claim that the attacks demonstrated that the mandatory quota system to relocate refugees across the EU was dead. Konrad Szymanski, minister for European affairs, stated that ‘Poland must retain full control over its borders, asylum and immigration’¹⁷.

In Hungary, one of the most controversial leaders of the 28 MS, Viktor Orbán, stated after Paris that ‘all terrorists are basically migrants’. In an argument which clearly contradicts the facts mentioned before, the Hungarian Prime Minister defends an ‘overwhelming logical’ link between terrorism and the inflow of Muslims into Europe. Therefore, after the attacks, ‘the number one job’ is ‘to defend the borders and to control who is coming in’, pointing out that the UE is ‘at war’ with Islamists in the Middle East¹⁸.

In the UK, two hours after the Brussels attacks and when still no information was made public on the identity of the bombers, Mike Hookem, the UKIP defence spokesman, maintained that the ‘horrific act of terrorism shows that Schengen free movement and lax border controls are a threat to our security’¹⁹. Migration has been a crucial part of the arguments for the Brexit, and UKIP and others often make populists statement like the former one to catch the attention of potential voters.

UK, Poland or Hungary are some of the examples of how populism was used across Europe, whether by parties in power or in the opposition, to make political gains. Surprisingly enough, however, the country which seemed more affected by the populist

¹⁷ Traynor, I. (2015, November 14). *Paris attacks: European leaders link terror threats to immigration*. Retrieved April 20, 2016, from The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/14/paris-attacks-european-leaders-link-terror-threats-to-immigration>.

¹⁸ Kaminski, M. (2015, November 23). *‘All the terrorists are migrants’*. Retrieved April 20, 2015, from POLITICO: <http://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-interview-terrorists-migrants-eu-russia-putin-borders-schengen/>.

¹⁹ Mason, R. (2016, March 22). *Cameron criticises Ukip for linking Brussels attacks to immigration*. Retrieved April 20, 2016, from The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/mar/22/cameron-criticises-ukip-for-linking-brussels-attacks-to-immigration>.

rhetoric and by the idea of equating terrorism and migration was the one which had defended the most an open-border policy on migration: Germany.

Angela Merkel's government has long been facing populist messages from both the opposition and members of its own coalition. In this part of the chapter, it will be argued that this pressure has ended up forcing her to change her approach towards migration. From an open-border position where Germany wanted to show its leadership and commitment with refugees to the rest of MS, Berlin has lately opted to yield place, implementing temporary border controls and, what is more worrying, advocating for the inefficient short-term solution of signing the EU-Turkey deal.

In the coalition government, Merkel's allies have long ago raised concerns about the Chancellor's migratory policy. After Paris, the CSU finance minister Markus Söder connected again migration to terrorism and said that 'the days of uncontrolled immigration and illegal entry can't continue just like that. Paris changes everything'. Minister Söder's words are particularly relevant bearing in mind that Söder comes from Bavaria, the frontline land receiving most of the migrants coming from Austria. This statement simply crystallises, again in a rather populist way, the feeling of discontent that Merkel's allies sensed when the inflow of migrants soared in Germany in mid-2015. Angela Merkel is hence in a difficult situation within her coalition government. She stands just in between hard line conservatives within CDU and its Bavarian sister CSU, on the one hand, and migrant-friendly but votes-needed SPD, on the other. In October 2015, the shaky coalition government met to face the crisis and came up with tougher measures, such as the partial suspension of family reunification, the creation of transit zones for migrants at the Germany-Austria border – finally not implemented – or plans to speed up deportations²⁰.

These measures come as no surprise if one considers the other challenge the CDU is facing. With the rise of the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfG) and the influence that its anti-immigration speech is having on CDU and CSU, one could expect the contagion of some extremist views among more conservative members of the government. Despite historically having its stronghold in the East of Germany, where unemployment rates are higher and nationalist views are more attractive, AfG managed to perform very well in other areas of the country in last March's regional elections. Those results were largely feared

²⁰ Stratfor. (2015, November 10). *What Germany's Divides Mean for the EU*. Retrieved April 22, 2016, from Stratfor: <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/what-germanys-divides-mean-eu>.

among the Christian-democrats, and despite the internal push for a change of approach towards migration, they could finally not be avoided. Consequently, as a Stratfor document certainly points out, ‘the regional results cause Merkel's leadership to be questioned by her own party. Members of the CDU and CSD will try to stop the haemorrhage of votes to the AfG by adopting elements of the nationalists' agenda’²¹.

Due to the internal and external pressures driven by populist claims, Angela Merkel was ‘obliged’ to change her migration policy if she wanted to reinforce her leadership, contain internal critiques and maintain her otherwise fragile coalition until the next general elections in 2017. To her, it was obvious that the inflow of migrants arriving in Germany had to be tackled anyhow, and soon, as she could not risk the loss of support of her allies and the consequent anticipated elections in a moment when AfG was pushing so badly. Therefore, she rushed to force an agreement with Turkey not to stop the smugglers, as it was defended, but to alt the inflow of migrants coming into Germany by closing down their main route through the Western Balkans.

2.3.The EU-Turkey deal through the eyes of Intergovernmentalism

When one looks at the EU-Turkey deal and compares it against the German backdrop, the logic question to ask would be: Why did Merkel push for an international agreement with Turkey? The answer to this question will be studied through the prism of Intergovernmentalism, which is one of the most popular theories to explain the EU integration. It is not the aim of this paper to test the validity of any theoretical approach, but due to its strong explicative power, Intergovernmentalism will be used here to analyse how Germany looked for a solution to its internal governmental crisis by means of the EU.

Based on the realist theory of International Relations, Intergovernmentalism has sovereign states as the central actors of its paradigm. They behave rationally in seek of maximising their political gains and pursuing their interests. Therefore, as Costa and Brack put it, ‘European cooperation is explained by a rational strategy of national leaders who, in a context of growing economic interdependence, intend to better manage specific problems through the sharing of limited aspects of their sovereignty. Thus, the process remains managed by the national interests what hinders the emergence of a truly supranational polity,

²¹ Stratfor. (2016, March 14). *The Refugee Crisis Redefines German Politics*. Retrieved April 22, 2016, from Stratfor: <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/refugee-crisis-redefines-german-politics>.

and is only the result of negotiation between Member States (interstate bargaining)²².

Departing from this perspective, Moravscik explained his ‘liberal inter-governmentalism’ as a threefold process of European integration. According to his model, MS first form their national preferences at home in order for the different governments to articulate a national position. Secondly, each government defends that position at the European level, normally at the European Council or at the Council, where the result of the agreement represents the relative power of every MS. Last, Moravscik comes back to the idea of rationalism to explain that, by giving up concrete aspects of its sovereignty and creating supranational bodies, MS choose to reduce transaction costs, enable collective action and ensure mutual cooperation²³.

Once the intergovernmentalist theory has been explained, it is possible to introduce Germany in the equation. According to Moravscik’s ‘liberal inter-governmentalism’, the situation developed in the previous chapters of this paper served to shape Germany’s national position at the first stage of the model. The increase of the number of migrants arriving in Germany in mid-2015 added to the Paris (and Brussels) attacks, which with most probability intended to link terrorism and migration, resulted in the intensification of the populist discourse. This turned into very poor results for the CDU in the last regional elections, the upsurge of AfG and an internal crisis within the coalition government. With that situation in mind, Angela Merkel decided that it was high time to act over the root of the crisis – the inflow of migrants to Germany – before it was too late. With the next German general elections at sight in 2017, Merkel needs to strengthen her own position within her party in face of the critiques. She also needs to stop the rise of CDU’s most direct rival on the right wing of the spectrum, the AfG, in order to avoid in the future similar results to those of the regional elections last March.

Taking into account these imperatives and continuing with Moravscik’s approach, Chancellor Merkel decided to elevate the German national position to the European bargaining table so she could pursue her interests there and find a solution to an internal

²² Costa, O., & Brack, N. (2014). *How the EU Really Works*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, p. 39.

²³ Moravscik, A. (1998). *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

problem. Despite what the defenders of the EU-Turkey deal might claim, the first goal of this agreement was never to bring the smugglers' business to an end, but rather to close down the Western Balkan route that was guiding thousands of migrants into Germany. By making the EU as a whole finalise this arrangement with Turkey, Angela Merkel pursued a double goal. On the one hand, she was not directly unfulfilling her pledge to receive with open arms as many migrants as necessary. Her policy was not completely changing as the migrants were not to be stopped at the German but at the Greek border, and it was not Germany doing so, but the EU. That way, she could avoid early elections by keeping the ruling coalition in place, as she would be satisfying CDU and CSU conservative members who ask for a tougher migration policy while maintaining the migrant-friendly SPD's support. In the meantime, on the other hand, she would also be gaining time to strengthen her position in the party, managing the inflow of migrants and keeping AfG at bay. For Merkel, it was clear that the easiest way to stop the inflow of migrants coming to Germany was not once they were already in the Schengen area, but before they entered Greece. Merkel, therefore, used Germany's position as economic engine of Europe, supporter of the quotas system and the EU's most populated country to advocate for a deal with Turkey at the second stage of Moravcsik's scheme.

As for the third stage, the deal with Turkey was a clearly rational step for Germany and many other countries. If the plan was to work out and the Western Balkan route had to be closed, Germany needed cooperation from other countries. The inflow of migrants arriving in Greece from Turkey through the Aegean Sea had to be interrupted, so a firm commitment was needed from both parts. Turkey, of course, benefited from the European state of emergency to raise its demands in exchange for stopping the flow in its territorial waters. Greece also welcomed the extra aid it would receive to manage the growing number of migrants trapped into its borders. As for other MS facing the same populist problems than Germany, they also showed relief when the agreement was proposed. In summary, thus, as explained by Moravcsik, the agreement served to allocate the necessary funds (to Turkey) to manage the crisis, to enable collective action and to ensure mutual cooperation. In view of this, it is possible to conclude that according to Intergovernmentalism, Merkel's Germany rationally made use of its influence within the EC in order to reach an agreement with Turkey, which would give her some margin of manoeuvre to stabilise the coalition government and to try to stop the rise of populism.

Now coming back to the first driving question of this paper – the reasons for adopting the EU-Turkey deal – it is possible to conclude that the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels vigorously fuelled an already existing trend of populism against migration. The false but easy argument of the link between terrorism and migration was exhibited with rage all around Europe, captivating the minds of the society and the policies of politicians. In Germany, this had a destabilising effect in the coalition government and disastrous consequences in the regional elections for Merkel’s CDU. With her leadership at stake, a pragmatic, short-term solution had to be found that allowed her to make it to the coming elections with guarantees of success. The answer was to stop the inflow of migrants while externalising the responsibility for the decision to the EU. In this context, the EU-Turkey deal was viewed as a rational decision in order to close the Western Balkan route and gain breathing space, which goes in line with the main hypothesis of this paper: that the EU-Turkey deal targets the migrants principally, rather than the smugglers.

3. The EU, Europol and the principal-agent model

However, closing down the Western-Balkan route was allegedly not the purpose of the EU-Turkey deal, but its consequence. As it was mentioned before, the EC aimed at disrupting the business model of the migrant smugglers by making it unattractive for asylum seekers to travel to Greece, as they would be automatically returned to Turkey. The agreement also compensates those who apply for asylum directly from Turkey, instead of irregularly arriving in Greece, by giving priority to their applications. According to the architects of the deal, this would boost migration through legal and controlled channels, end with the smugglers’ revenue and stop irregular arrivals in Greece. As a consequence, if no more people disembark at the Greek shores, the inflow of migrants to Germany and other countries through the Western Balkan route will decrease, which was the real priority of the deal as it has been explained.

Nevertheless, even assuming that fighting migrant smuggling was the real objective of the arrangement, it will be very complicated to be fulfilled under the current circumstances. The present chapter will explore to what extent the deal will really help to pursue that goal. With that purpose, it will build over the intergovernmentalist theory, which has rationalism at its base, and stress it further thanks to the principal-agent model, in which the MS present at

the EC would be the principals creating an agent, Europol, to help them fight migrant smuggling.

As it was described, Intergovernmentalism argues that MS rationally choose to cooperate and create supranational bodies because this will allow them to best pursue their national interest at the international level. According to Rosemond, ‘another key component of the rationalist argument has been the application of ‘principal-agent analysis’ to EU politics. Here, self-regarding actors (‘principals’) find that their preferences are best served by the delegation of certain authoritative tasks to common institutions (‘agents’)’²⁴. Kassim and Menon²⁵ have listed the reasons that typically lead ‘principals’ to delegate those tasks to ‘agents’. Those reasons are 1) to reduce transaction costs and ensure collective action; 2) to create ‘framing agreements’ that subsequently will shape concrete actions or negotiations; 3) to improve policy-making by establishing an agent with technical expertise; 4) to avoid market failure and harmonise the regulatory framework; 5) to displace responsibility for unpopular decisions; 6) to ‘lock in’ distributional benefits; and 7) to allow for policy-making stability by delegating agenda-setting powers to the agent.

The ‘principal-agent’ model is normally associated with problematic conducts of the agent which, due to different causes, undertakes actions that contradict the interests of its creator. The theory normally studies situations where the agent develops its own agenda, or its mandate is wrongly given, in both cases due to asymmetric information²⁶. However, the use of this theory is less common to explain irrational behaviours of the ‘principal’, such as the present case.

Europol was founded in 1993 as an international organisation by the EU MS, and received its funds directly from them. Throughout the years, its mandate has been progressively expanded, but it was not until 2007 that the Justice and Home Affairs Council decided to replace the initial Europol Convention for a Council Decision. This legal basis has recently been upgraded to the category of EU Regulation according to the requirements to the Lisbon Treaty, but Europol’s history clearly shows its intergovernmental nature. Moreover,

²⁴ Rosamond, B. (2013). Theorizing the European Union after Integration Theory. In M. Cini, & N. Borragán, *European Union Politics* (pp. 85-102). Oxford: OUP, p. 91.

²⁵ Kassim, H., & Menon, A. (2003). The principal-agent approach and the study of the European Union: promise unfulfilled? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10 (1), pp. 123–124.

²⁶ Schimmelfennig, F., & Rittberger, B. (2015). The EU as a system of differentiated integration: a challenge for theories of European integration? In J. Richardson, & S. Mazey, *European Union: power and policy-making* (Fourth ed., pp. 33-62). New York: Routledge.

under its current and future mandate, Europol has the duty to assist and support MS in their investigations on serious and organised crime and terrorism. For this reason and following the ‘principal-agent’ model, MS will be considered here as the ‘principals’ which, first by means of a Convention and then by a Council Decision, created Europol as their ‘agent’ with a very clear and precise goal: to provide them with investigative support in cases ‘affecting two or more Member States in such a way as to require a common approach by the Member States owing to the scale, significance and consequences of the offences’ (art. 4.1. Council Decision). If this mandate is compared with Kassin and Menon’s motives for MS to create ‘agents’, it is possible to deduct that the rationale after the founding of Europol was ‘to reduce transaction costs and ensure collective action’ with regards to police cooperation in transnational crimes; ‘to improve policy-making by establishing an agent with technical expertise’; and ‘to allow for policy-making stability by delegating agenda-setting powers to the agent’. Concerning the two latter, it is important to remember that Europol has the competence to influence the multi-annual policy cycle, which was established by the EU in 2010 with the aim of ensuring ‘effective cooperation between Member States law enforcement agencies, EU Institutions, EU Agencies and relevant third parties; delivering coherent and robust operational action targeting the most pressing criminal threats’²⁷. It does so by producing Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessments (SOCTA), a ‘set of recommendations based on an in-depth analysis of the major crime threats facing the EU’²⁸. SOCTA’s recommendations are then translated into priority areas for the next four years. Multi-Annual Strategic Action Plans are developed for each priority area before setting out operational action plans to combat the priority threats. The cycle is then closed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of the action plans.

The EU MS hence try to harmonise their action against serious and organized crime and develop a joint and stable policy by enabling their ‘agent’, Europol, to build up its own expertise and deliver a series of recommendations according to the threat trends facing the EU. For the purpose of this paper, it is worth noticing that facilitated illegal immigration (FII) is one of the nine priority areas signalled by Europol in its SOCTA and which, thus, has been recognised by the Council as a European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats

²⁷ Europol. (2016). *EU Policy Cycle - EMPACT*. Retrieved April 29, 2016, from Europol: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-policy-cycle-empact>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

(EMPACT) project ‘to coordinate actions by Member States and EU organisations against the identified threats’²⁹.

In this context, and coming back to the alleged main objective of the EU-Turkey deal – the fight against migrant smuggling and FII –, Europol has developed the expertise that its ‘principals’ entrusted it and has repeatedly flagged up the most relevant trends on FII and the behaviours of organised crime groups (OCG) dealing with migrant smuggling. Already in 2013, when the migratory crisis had still not reached its peak, Europol’s SOCTA indentified OCGs as highly international, ‘no longer restrained in the same way by geographic boundaries [...] [nor] easily associated with specific regions or centres of gravity’³⁰. The SOCTA also acknowledges that ‘OCGs are flexible in responding to changes and quickly adopt new transportation routes and methods. Facilitators of illegal immigration find new routes when law enforcement controls are enhanced at certain border crossing points causing the local and temporary displacement of migration flows’³¹.

This characteristic of OCGs has been recently confirmed in an updated report released on the occasion of the launching of Europol’s EMSC. The report recognises the importance of OCGs in the current crisis, as 90% of the more than one million irregular migrants that reached the EU during 2015 used their services at some stage of their journey³². In total, Europol has identified ‘more than 40,000 individuals suspected of being involved in migrant smuggling’³³, who normally gather and act in more than 230 locations in and outside the EU, typically creating smuggling hotspots along the main migratory routes³⁴. In line with the findings of the SOCTA 2013, the report assures that ‘the routes used by irregular migrants will likely further diversify and new hotspots for migrant smuggling will emerge in response to shifting migration flows’³⁵. This is possible thanks to the flexible structure that normally characterises the OCGs involved in migrant smuggling, which often relies on autonomous partners working for different criminal organizations at local level³⁶. This enables OCGs to swiftly adapt to any change in the migratory route and to elude law enforcement pressure. Such a fact was confirmed by Wil van Gemert, Deputy Director of Operations of Europol,

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Europol. (2013). *SOCTA 2013*. The Hague: Europol, p. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Europol. *Migrant smuggling in the EU. op. cit.*, p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

when he assured that ‘migrants still want to go to the EU, and there will be alternate routes looked for and offered by organized crime. [The difference is that] they will operate more covertly, using difficult routes despite increased enforcement’³⁷.

This seems a rather logical conclusion when contrasted with the described background. When facing a great variety of flexible and highly internationalised OCGs which are distributed and operate along the major routes, it is hard to imagine how the closure of one single route – from Turkey to Greece – is supposed to disrupt the business model of over 40,000 individuals making profit of the migratory crisis, which in addition have shown great capacity of adaptation to circumstances. The idea of convincing asylum seekers of waiting patiently in Turkey and come to Europe through legal channels is also at odds with reality. As Van Gemert argued, asylum seekers will still want to come to Europe as long as they don’t have possibility to feel at home somewhere else, and Turkey is far from being that place, despite all the reforms it has undertaken to implement the deal.

In consequence, it is not surprising to discover that in spite of the effective reduction of the flow of migrants traveling by sea from Turkey to Greece, and following Van Gemert’s prediction, other difficult routes have started to be re-used to smuggle migrants into Europe. According to Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino, Operations Commander of the EUNAVFOR Med, three weeks after the signature of the EU-Turkey deal the percentage of migrants opting for the Eastern route – from Turkey to Greece – heavily switched towards the more dangerous Southern route – from Libya to Italy, where over 2,000 people died in 2015. While in the first months of 2016 the proportion was 88% using the Eastern route against 12% in the Southern route, in the first three weeks after the deal the figures were 45% Eastern - 55% Southern route, a change that he estimated to have its cause in the agreement. In addition, he confirmed his belief that this trend is likely to increase towards the Southern route in summer. In the same intervention, Rear Admiral Credendino pointed to the resumption of the Egyptian route, which had been materially closed since November 2015, with 6 ships departing from the Egyptian coast towards Italy³⁸. This renewed interest for routes leading to Italy, among

³⁷ Alderman, L. (2016, March 11). *Smugglers Prey on Migrants Desperate to Find Back Doors to Europe*. Retrieved May 2, 2016, from The New York Times: http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/03/12/world/europe/european-union-migrant-crisis-smuggling.html?_r=3&referrer=https://www.google.nl/.

³⁸ Credendino, E. (2016, March 20). Panel 1 - Borders control: cooperation among EU missions and agencies and international organisations. *Joint LIBE/SEDE hearing ‘Securing the external borders of the EU - a*

other first destinations within the EU, has already had its first deadly results, as some 500 migrants were reported dead when their boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea in mid-April³⁹. In the same interview for this article Rodríguez Gaya⁴⁰ acknowledged that, ‘surprisingly’, the diversification of routes for Syrians staying in Turkey is not taking place yet, ‘probably because they are waiting to see how things develop with the EU-Turkey deal’. Nonetheless, in line with Credendino’s figures, he explained that the number of Sub-Saharan migrants taking the Southern Mediterranean route is dramatically soaring. He also advised that there are ‘as many routes offered by OGCs as nationalities willing to come to Europe’, which indicates that the current migratory crisis is not only about Syrians, but concerns hundreds of thousands of people in Africa and the Middle East escaping from war, persecution and poverty.

The tendency to use new, more dangerous routes did not take a long time to develop and is expected to continue in the future as the Eastern route remains effectively closed under the EU-Turkey deal, as Rodríguez Gaya recognised⁴¹. This fact points to the inefficiency of the agreement to reach its alleged priority of disrupting the business model of the smugglers, as OGCs persist to offer their services to desperate migrants. The material effects of the deal were not difficult to predict if one examines the assessments and analyses produced by Europol, the ‘agent’ in charge of building up expertise on FII. For that reason, two possible conclusions can be drawn: 1) MS – and especially Germany – behaved irrationally by choosing to sign a deal with Turkey that was clearly at odds with its alleged objective of fighting the smugglers, as it could be deducted from the analyses provided by their ‘agent’ Europol. 2) MS and Germany had another priority: to ensure a short term decrease in the inflows of migrants, which would help them find national breathing space and cope with the rise of anti-migration populism. As it has been argued throughout this paper, and in line with rationalism, Intergovernmentalism and the principal-agent theory, this is a much more rational choice which seeks an answer for national problems and is therefore the most probable motive laying behind the EU-Turkey deal.

challenge for external and internal security - ongoing action to combat criminal smuggling at the borders of the EU. Brussels, Belgium: European Parliament.

³⁹ Melvin, D. (2016, April 20). *As many as 500 migrants drowned in Mediterranean, agency says*. Retrieved May 03, 2016, from CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/20/middleeast/migrants-drown-mediterranean/>.

⁴⁰ Rodríguez Gaya, Á. (2016, May 26). Interview with a senior specialist at the EMSC of Europol. (J. Ferro Rodríguez, Interviewer).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The second driving question of the present paper sought to explore to what extent the deal really fulfils its major objective of bringing the migrant smuggling business to an end. As it has been argued with the facts provided by Rear Admiral Credendino and Rodríguez Gaya, the EU-Turkey deal is far from being an efficient antidote to migrant smuggling. The ability of OCGs to switch routes within hours makes it impossible to fight them by reducing the attractiveness for migrants to utilised the Eastern Mediterranean route. Certainly, as statistics show, the inflow to Greece has decreased, enabling the closure of the Western Balkan route. However, OCGs are still in business, operating with more dangerous means and through more deadly routes. Based on the amount and quality of the information made available by Europol, the ‘agent’ with the mandate and expertise to fight against FII, it is hard to imagine that this consequence was not expected by the signers of the agreement. As a result, and according to the main argument of this study, it is possible to affirm that the EU-Turkey deal was not made to disrupt the business model of OCGs, but instead, it targeted the flow of migrants coming for Turkey as a short-term solution to concrete problems at national level, its major exponent being Germany.

4. Political solutions for terrorism, populism and migration

The present paper has shown the current situation, consequences and future developments of the migratory crisis, with the signature of the EU-Turkey deal as its maximum expression and in relation with terrorism and populism. The current chapter will propose political lines both at national and EU level in order to bring the European leaders back to a correct management of the situation. In doing so, this chapter will focus on the root causes behind the three matters, proposing key actions that will target the core of the problem.

The first chapter was subdivided into the three parts, the first one being the invented link between terrorists and migrants. Here it was argued that IS intended to make Europe think that all migrants may be potential terrorists able to perpetrate attacks once in the EU, with a double goal: 1) to cause the exaggerated impression that the IS is capable of infiltrating militants at will, who are ready to act anywhere, anytime, thus posing a constant threat; 2) to trigger an attitude of rejection towards migrants, which will make them think of IS as a safe haven instead. Both goals contribute, as this paper has shown, to the raise of populism. Consequently, the European leaders should concentrate their actions on those

points. In doing so, they would be at the same time controlling the national pressure that often obliges them to seek for short-term alternatives at the European level. This, in turn, would facilitate the application of real solutions to the crisis and put an end to the suffering of thousands of people.

The political solutions to the invented link between terrorism and migration would need to be directed towards the prevention of the disproportionate psychological effects caused by terrorist attacks. Regarding the first of the goals IS had in Paris, politicians should try to reduce the panic levels in their society. They should keep the extraordinary measures adopted after the attacks at the minimum, and always to a proportionate extent, so people can discern the real risks from the exaggerated ones. The ultimate objective is to protect our values and to maintain our life style untouched. In this sense, the reactions in Twitter after the Paris attacks were highly positive and showed an adequate level of resilience. In Paris, people used the hashtag #jesuisenterrasse to post pictures sharing a drink at the terrace of a restaurant despite the fact that the attacks had targeted several restaurants. Similarly, in Brussels, people reacted with humour to the lockdown of the city by tweeting pictures of cats. The police reacted to this trend by thanking their cooperation with a picture of a bowl of cat food. These are the correct attitudes to promote in the event of an attack. On the other hand, however, after Paris and Brussels, French and Belgian authorities decided to maintain a high level of alert and place military in the streets of their capitals. This measure should be avoided as much as possible if other alternatives exist. Counter-terrorism is a task typically belonging to the realm of law enforcement and police action, and should be fought with those means. Our societies are not accustomed to see military presence in their cities, always relying on the police to enforce civilian security. The fact of placing the military in the streets is therefore an extraordinary measure which indicates the people that the police cannot cope with the terrorist threat on their own and thus requires an extra assistance to fulfil its mandate. This, in addition, points to an imminent and serious threat that may occur sooner or later, which in turn exacerbates the psychological effects of any previous attack and directly contributes to the objectives of the attackers. For this reason, the military should be placed in the cities only to cover up for a momentary lack of police forces and during the shortest period of time possible.

The second goal of the IS strategy in Paris was to provoke a feeling of rejection to migrants in the European society, so this could have an effect in the thousands of migrants

fleeing zones under IS control. As it has been highlighted, the Paris attacks were intentionally used by some as a means to lead the European society from fear to anger, and from there to hate. Chapter one has shown how this happened in spite of the arguments defending the lack of relation between terrorism and migration, the most important being Europol's statements on the absence of evidence that terrorist groups systematically use the migratory flow to sneak militants into Europe. However, even with Europol reports and objective facts, populist views have managed to impose themselves. The surge of extreme-right parties around Europe, not only in Germany, but also in France, Poland, The Netherlands, Denmark, etc., leads to the conclusion that populism is triumphing. There is room in Europe for anti-system dialectics that profit from the migratory crisis to mobilise some sectors of the population.

These dialectics are piercing our societies and forcing our leaders to adopt part of their demands in order to stop an eventual loss of votes, as it has been pointed out. This, however, is only possible due to the inability of the political class to fight anti-migration claims in their own ground: the political speech. Before Merkel decided to sign the EU-Turkey deal as a getaway from her domestic turmoil, she had enjoyed the support of the German society when she announced her policy of 'open doors'. At the beginning of the crisis, therefore, Germans backed the hosting of asylum seekers, but this feeling of welcoming and solidarity was progressively displaced by voices demanding a tougher line on migration, given the incapacity of the government in Germany (and elsewhere) to properly explain their policies. Coming back to the case of the Syrian passport, the sophistication of the attacks required a high level of training and preparation which could hardly have been perpetrated by an asylum seeker in his first month in Europe. This fact, in addition to Europol's findings, would have been worth stressing publicly in order to conceal the first reactions after the appearance of the document. This case perfectly illustrates the extra communicative efforts needed to fight populist dialectics. When dealing with populism, facts and statistics are normally available, and they should be used promptly so that the pathway from fear to hate is not walked by our societies.

Decisive action should also be taken in order to prevent suffering. In the case of the current migratory crisis, two communities are suffering from the adoption of a policy driven by populism. On the one hand, the EU as a whole suffers when it sees how the values it was built upon crumbled and were exchanged for walls and division. On the other hand, it is the migrant community that, regardless of their reasons for migration, suffers the most. The EU-

Turkey deal has resulted in thousands of people trapped in Greece and other hundreds of thousands forced to take deadly alternative routes to reach Europe. Any solution seeking to avoid this suffering and effectively deal with the inflows of migrants should have a real European dimension, as it is a situation which equally affects all MS.

Probably the most important of those solutions would be an ambitious revision of the Dublin Regulation. The current system makes the country of first arrival responsible for processing the applications of asylum seekers. Such a system, which is putting all the pressure on the shoulders of frontline countries like Greece and Italy, was not thought for moments of crisis and has been clearly overwhelmed. The size of the inflows and the lack of capabilities of those countries, especially Greece, forced them to suspend the application of Dublin and let many unchecked asylum seekers advance northwards. This led to the application of the ‘wave-through’ approach and to keeping the EU legislation on asylum in stand-by mode. In order for the legality to be resumed and for Greece to come back to it, the Dublin system must be revised in accordance with the new situation and based on the principle of solidarity among EU MS. The Commission was well aware of that necessity, and last 6 April launched a Communication addressing two options for the revision of Dublin.

The first, more revolutionary option aimed to centralise the procedure of application at the EU level, so the asylum seekers presented their claims to the EU as a whole, and the EU distributed those who are granted asylum protection among its MS according to a distribution key. The second, more conservative choice is based on the same principles that already apply under the current state of the regulation – keeping the country of first arrival responsible for processing the applications –, and entrusts the management of great inflows in moments of crisis to a corrective fairness mechanism. The first option was based on a similar initiative included in the roadmap on the refugee crisis produced by the European political group ALDE in February 2015. Yet, despite having found large support at the European Parliament and being a real European solution, it was finally ruled out by the Commission in view of the lack of willingness and solidarity that MS had shown in the recent past. Instead, on 4 May 2016, the Commission chose the second line of action for its proposal on the revision of Dublin, coming up with a system to ‘fine’ those MS which refuse to be solidary and take part in that corrective fairness mechanism. This desperate measure is the last attempt from the Commission to get the MS to actively participate in the relocation system. However,

it is a bit naive to think that MS will feel intimidated by the threat of economic retaliation. Solidarity cannot be imposed by force, nor can willingness be gathered through sanctions.

The reform of Dublin will be done through the ordinary legislative procedure, with the approval of a Regulation that will substitute the current one. This means that, most likely, MS at the Council will seize their role as co-legislators to get rid of or substantially reduce the economic contribution proposed by the Commission in case of non-participation in the relocation mechanism, turning the proposal into a mere copy of the current failed system. Before this happens, however, the European Parliament will have to set up its position. In view of the ample consensus among the main political groups found at the meeting of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee on 20 April, when the Commission presented its two options, the European Parliament should take this opportunity to stay united and deliver a clear message of rejection to the proposal that both Commission and Council can understand. The European Parliament, in democratic representation of the European people, should make it clear that a simple cosmetic revision will not suffice to solve the crisis and that a real European solution, based on the principle of solidarity, should be found. Only by making such a clear political and democratic statement could the reluctance from MS at the Council be overcome. By energetically opposing quotas and the relocation of refugees, and driven by populism, MS have managed to impose their national interest, turning Greece into a huge refugee camp and outsourcing the management of the inflows to Turkey. Those MS are now trying to do the same with the Dublin Regulation. However, precisely because the EU-Turkey deal will not stop the smugglers, as it has been argued, the inflow of migrants will continue and the pressure will grow for MS when the first effects of the deal disappear with the arrival of summer. Thus, the need for a revision of Dublin will keep being high in the agenda, maximising the urgency for an agreement to be reached. The pro-European majority at the European Parliament should size this urgency to clearly point out that no agreement is possible for the revision of Dublin if it is not really European and based on the principle of solidarity.

The present chapter has sought to offer political solutions for the three main phenomena studied along this paper. By addressing what is at the root of terrorism, populism and the migration crisis, the specific actions that have been proposed here would help manage them. On terrorism, the focus has been put on the promotion of resilience and the protection of our values and life style in order to avoid the disproportionate psychological effects caused

by an attack. With regards to populism, the key resides at the narrative level, where politicians should make an extra communicative effort. Facts and figures are normally available to fight biased populist messages, but politicians often fail to make them understandable to the target audience. Last but not least, regarding migration, the current flows have a broad component of asylum seekers which frequently makes them the first group to be addressed. For that reason, the most important piece of legislation to approve would be the revision of the Dublin system, which establishes the country responsible for processing the asylum applications. Here, a real European approach based on the principle of solidarity is paramount and irreplaceable by any other coercive measure. Those political responses play at both national and European level to rise to the challenge posed by the three phenomena at their core. By adopting them, decision-makers would be at least looking at the heart of the problem and, luckily, having a deeper insight on how to manage them.

5. Conclusions

The present paper has explored the relation between the Paris attacks, the rise of populism and the signature of the EU-Turkey deal. By looking at the reasons for adopting the EU-Turkey deal and questioning to what extent it really fulfils its major objective of bringing the migrant smuggling business to an end, this study argues that the agreement with Turkey does not target the smugglers, but the migrants.

Departing from the events of 13 November 2015 in Paris, the paper has focused on a probable IS strategy with the objective of linking migration and terrorism, in order to trigger rejection towards migrants. It has studied how far-right narratives seized the finding of a fake Syrian passport to create hate and gain political influence. In Germany, this translated into a crisis within Merkel's coalition government and very important results for the xenophobic AfD, in a moment when general elections are approaching next year. In view of this, and through the use of the intergovernmentalist theory, it has been held that Merkel rationally decided to pursue a national agenda at the EU level by promoting the EU-Turkey deal. The primary objective was, for her, to immediately stop the inflow of migrants coming to Germany, so she could face the push of populism from both within her government and AfD, without directly changing her policy of 'open-arms'. In Germany it was clear that the easiest way to prevent migrants from entering the country, while avoiding criticism for doing so, was not at the border with Austria, but at the external borders of the EU. With that in mind,

Merkel used her role of leader of the EU at the EC to advocate for a deal with Turkey. The result of that action has been examined here, together with its future development, from the perspective of Europol. According to the reports and threat assessments produced by this ‘agent’, which was created by its ‘principals’ to develop expertise on FII, migrant smugglers are highly international, very numerous and incredibly flexible. These features enable them to quickly adapt to the eventual closure of some routes. Consequently, as Europol’s Deputy Director of Operations predicted, more dangerous alternatives have been created or resumed, such as the Southern Mediterranean route from Libya to Italy (Lampedusa). The continuous activity carried out by the smugglers demonstrates the inefficacy of the deal to fulfil its alleged first objective. In view of the quantity and quality of the evidences made available by Europol, the facility of prediction of such result, if compared against the backdrop of the situation in Germany and other EU countries, makes it possible to conclude that the real target of the EU-Turkey deal was the migrants, not the smugglers, as this paper has proposed from the beginning. Subsequently, the last chapter has been devoted to suggest concrete political actions that would address the root causes of the three main phenomena studied here: terrorism, populism and migration.

This article has tried to shed light on the real objective of a very controversial arrangement in a context of high populist pressure. The argumentative line has sought to follow a cause-effect rationale to try to provide the conclusions with the solidest scientific base possible. Nevertheless, the great complexity of the matters covered here, as well as the space constraints of the paper itself, have been the major challenges of the writing process. Therefore, although the findings of the study are based on hardly deniable evidence, the nature of those challenges obliges to cautiously reading other underlying motives and circumstances for the signature of the EU-Turkey deal. In this sense, the present work might be a good touchstone to further analyse this topic. Other studies could undergo an in-depth examination of some of the arguments raised here, such as the deliberate plating of the fake Syrian passport, the empiric impact of the Paris attacks in the rise of populism, the internal discussion in Merkel’s coalition government on how to deal with the inflow of migrants, the bargaining power exercised by Germany inside the EC, the real blow of the deal on the business model of the smugglers or the implementation of some of the solutions suggested here. Unfortunately, the space limit and intrinsic characteristics of this paper did not allow for a more detailed exam of these and other questions. However, if the conclusions reached here



are considered as a valid reference, they could lead to further investigating this fascinating and highly relevant topic.

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