• The Restructuring of the EU-Türkiye Migration Framework: Border Governance, Human Rights Compliance, and Equitable Burden-Sharing Mechanisms

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Audience: European Union Institutions (European Commission, Council of the European Union, European Parliament, European External Action Service)

Summary

KEY POINTS

1. Big Socioeconomic Burden: Having millions of refugees in Turkey creates huge pressure on public services, schools, and hospitals, which can cause instability and secondary migration to Europe.
2. Implementation Problems: Strict border rules and central funding delay support for refugees and increase the risk of illegal pushbacks at borders.
3. Policy Reforms: The European Union should update the migration framework by adding human rights monitoring, giving direct financial aid to local groups, and creating safe legal paths for refugees.

The implementation of the European Union's migration rules and border controls is a very important test for European policy. The 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement tried to stop irregular migration and save lives in the Aegean Sea, but it created big economic and social problems for Turkey and other host countries. Right now, the system has serious problems: strict border rules make it hard to protect human rights, and central funding does not reach local projects easily. To solve these problems and keep the region stable, the European Union needs to change its strategy. The EU must protect human rights, send money directly to local civil society through the Global Europe Instrument, and make sure that burden-sharing is fair for everyone.

1. PROBLEM AND CONTEXT: MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL STABILITY

Because of conflicts and crises in the Middle East and surrounding regions, Turkey has hosted the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in the world for nearly ten years. At first, everyone thought this was a short-term crisis, but now it is a long-term social and economic reality.

According to reports from the European Council on Foreign Relations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), stability in countries like Turkey directly affects the security and borders of the European Union. The current system relies too much on stopping people at the borders through the 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement. However, these small and short-term measures are not enough to solve long-term integration and legal protection issues.

Economic pressures, local social tensions, and illegal labor exploitation make life very difficult for refugees. At the same time, dangerous illegal crossings across the Eastern Mediterranean continue, putting migrants at risk from smugglers. Managing these migration movements requires a complete and sustainable policy supported by European Union mechanisms.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND EU COUNTERMEASURES

The The rules for EU-Türkiye migration relations are based on international laws and European Union regulations:

* 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol: This is the main international rule that protects refugees and bans refoulement (forcing refugees to go back to countries where their lives or freedom are in danger).

* The European Union Pact on Migration and Asylum: This rule manages internal solidarity, border checks, and asylum applications among EU members.

* EU-Türkiye Statement (2016) and Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRIT): This is the main deal used to stop human smuggling, send irregular migrants back from the Aegean islands, and provide EU financial support for refugee health and education.

* Global Europe External Relations Financing Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe): This is the main financial tool that the EU uses for foreign policy, migration management, and development aid in host countries.

* European Union Fundamental Rights Charter & Frontex Regulation: These rules make sure that human rights are always protected during border operations.

3. EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

Data from the UNHCR, Human Rights Watch, and the World Bank show that despite financial support from the EU, there are still major problems in practice:

* Centralized Aid Delays: Most EU funds go through centralized government channels or big international agencies. According to Amnesty International, this creates bureaucratic delays that stop local NGOs and municipalities from getting money for their frontline work.

* Socioeconomic Pressure: World Bank reports show that hosting many refugees without formal jobs puts heavy pressure on local water, housing, and health systems. Without support for local host communities, social tensions rise, and people try to migrate to Europe.

* Human Rights Issues: Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group report that external border controls often lack transparency. Incidents like pushbacks and restricted access to asylum violate international law and the principle of non-refoulement.

4. Recommendations

1. Human Rights Monitoring in Border Operations The Council of the EU and the European Parliament should make sure that all border funding is tied to independent human rights monitoring. This will guarantee that everyone follows the 1951 Refugee Convention and stops illegal pushbacks at borders.
2. Direct Financial Support to Local Groups The European Commission should change the Global Europe rules to avoid bureaucratic delays. Money should go directly to local NGOs, city municipalities, and refugee organizations to help social integration.
3. Focus on Long-Term Development Aid The European External Action Service and the European Commission should change their focus from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term support. Aid should focus on formal jobs, school capacities, and local municipal infrastructure.
4. Expand Legal Pathways and Fair Burden-Sharing EU member states must share the burden fairly by setting official quotas for refugee resettlement, humanitarian visas, and scholarships. Creating legal ways to travel will stop people from using dangerous smuggling routes across the Mediterranean.

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