

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PERCEPTION OF 'EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY' IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE MIGRANT CRISIS

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The continued presence of migrants has developed a form of frustration, distrust of higher levels of government, as well as suspicion of international aid, especially of the financial type.



Their views (local population) are a real indicator of the dysfunctionality of the state apparatus of B&H, but also of the permanent presence and hope that accession to the Union will profoundly alter this situation.



The principal openness and continuation of enlargement policy is a crucial source of feeling among citizens that even beyond the borders of the Union, its solidarity should be effective.

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INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the migrant crisis has opened up a whole spectrum of sensitive problems in Europe itself. Scientists, humanitarians, politicians and media workers offered their own explanations of the complex topic. The focus of the interpretations offered ranged from humanitarian moralising, leniency over the absence of acceptance policy, to the threat to national identities, to undermining the geopolitical foundations of Europe. Today it is quite clear that the European narrative has taken a fundamental turn, from a purely humanitarian issue to a security problem. It was the migrant crisis that showed the fragility of the concept of 'European solidarity' that the European Union proudly boasted. The concept served as a normative centripetal tool that was supposed to provide reciprocity in crisis situations, and was also an undisputed 'attractive force' to all potential candidate countries. The migrant crisis has not only caused a profound distortion of solidarity within the European Union, but also among countries awaiting the accession process. Despite the encouraging discourse of European officials and the general assistance in managing the migrant crisis, the perception of citizens and political actors in B&H does not reflect confidence in European solidarity. The frequency of the mass influx of migrants created a zone in which they stayed in anticipation of the opportunity to cross the border, which greatly increased the number of incidents that began to create a relationship of deep distrust and fear within the domestic population. The turnaround was enormous, the migrant crisis went from a moral-humanitarian topic to a security-sovereignty issue. This drastically reduced the influence of European solidarity and exponentially raised scepticism towards the Union 's activities. This paper has two research goals: to reconstruct the response of local entity and central authorities regarding the migrant crisis, and whether there is a real sense of European solidarity in B&H amid the confusion and tensions produced by the migrant crisis. The paper offers a double analysis: political rhetoric of local government entities in B&H, and on the other hand the attitudes of the local population in cities that have directly experienced certain forms of migrant

crisis (Bihać, Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar). The survey collected data on the attitudes of the local population, and their systematisation and statistical processing showed tendencies in the perception of European solidarity in those who should have felt the it as a direct help in solving the crisis. Furthermore, the way of framing and articulating the concept of European solidarity in the context of the migrant crisis by political actors in B&H is presented. This way, one can get an insight into the initial attitudes of the actors and the evolution of the rhetoric of political actors about the migrant crisis, but also the concept of European solidarity in the context of the crisis situation in these areas.

I

CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATION OF EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

1.1. SOLIDARITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

There are two fundamental problems with the terminological determination of the concept of solidarity. The first consists of the fact that it has a rooting in common sense use without in-depth insight into the connotation of the term, and the second is a multitude of variations in different spheres: media, politics, economics, religion, academy, etc. In both cases the fact is that solidarity appears as a 'floating signifier' where there is no frequent practice of its application (Grimmel, 2017:166), therefore it "varies in form and context and range and manifestation" (Lynch, Kalaitzake, Crean, 2008:5). Precisely defining the concept of solidarity does not necessarily mean its uniform use, since solidarity can be manifested on different spatial scales from local to global, and in the active sense from individual actions to group and mass actions. The ambiguity about the concept of solidarity actually arises in the fundamental problem of the absence of a clear meaning of "what it means to act in solidarity" (Grimmel, 2017:170).

Solidarity seems to be of an extremely performative character, which is why it should be noted as a process, i.e., solidarity should be created in the Rorty sense (Grimmel, My Giang, 2017:2). For this reason, each manifestation of solidarity is specific, and depends on the constellation of forces or layers that a particular community creates for its own purposes.

"We need to judge solidarity not simply in the abstract, but in terms of the particular mix or configuration or constellation of elements that compose it, and in terms of its ability to deal, first of all, with deep potential economic, social, political, or geopolitical crises that come at some point for all of us, and, secondly, with the most remarkable feature of Western modernity: its demographic, cultural, social and geographic diversity" (Katznelson, 2006: 139-140.)

Many authors who have thematically emphasized the phenomenon of solidarity most often point out that the test of its existence is a crisis situation, a state of emergency in which the community is currently found and the desire for collective preservation which activates the forces of solidarity that it has produced up to that point. Dean Spade (2020) goes a step further by arguing that it is a form of getting the community out of crisis situations by relying on its own capabilities and reciprocity that never existed before. For him, solidarity would be some form of autoimmune reaction to collective problems with the desire to survive and maintain the community. If collective problems are not adequately overcome or solved by the solidarity of members of the community, then solidarity remains only on the level of normative abstraction and linguistic figure.¹ "If solidarity is merely a cover for good times but cannot help us get through hard times, it is not much of a model or ideal for social integration" (Katznelson, 2006:140). If we accept that solidarity is "the preparedness to share one's own resources with others, be that directly by donating money or time in support of others or indirectly by supporting the state to reallocate and redistribute some of the funds gathered through taxes or contributions" (Lahusen and Grasso, 2018: 4, according to, Corner 2012:2), then it is necessary to emphasize that it differs from charitable activity, alms or other forms of humanitarianism. Through the mutuality mechanism, "institutionalized solidarity" is articulated (Lynch, Kalaitzake, Crean, 2008:13)², which establishes clear procedural practices and institutional competences. It creates: precise legal basis, political mechanisms and implementation entities, but also clear expectations of solidarity facilities, and criteria for fulfilling the obligation

1 Andreas Grimmel and Susanne My Giang example of a modern crisis within the European Union point to a similar point: In this light, the current crisis situation reveals that solidarity is not lost, but the concept of solidarity that we are talking about in the EU is still a weak one that is rarely practised" (Grimmel, My Giang, 2017: 2).

2 Unlike institutionalised, there is a 'spontaneous solidarity' top up. These may be individual, group and mass activities that can take institutional form at a given time (Lynch, Kalaitzake, Crean, 2008: 13)

of reciprocity. At the moment of its institutionalization in a certain form of public policies, solidarity becomes a "form of duty" (Lynch, Kalaitzake, Crean, 2008:7).³

In theoretical considerations of the foundations of the European Union as the *sui generis* of the political community, it is almost impossible to avoid the concept of solidarity. The basic premise of this paper starts from the notion that: "Solidarity is a basic value of the Union" (Hübner, 2006:126). The latter is taken as a normative base on which the entire institutional assembly, as well as the European civic identity, is tarnished. Its importance consists in what Jacques Delors concisely formulated through triptych: "Competition that stimulates, cooperation that strengthens, solidarity that unites" (Spadry, 2010:4). This certainly confirms the notion that "solidarity was given a central place in the canon of values of the European Union"(Grimmel, 2017:161). To this day within the EU, "the concept of solidarity is an ideological hybrid that is stretched and strained to meet the demands of different political situations"(Lynch, Kalaitzake, Crean, 2008:5).

The Lisbon Treaty further strengthened the concept of solidarity by including it in the preamble, but also tying it to *policy* areas in as many as 20 cases (Knodt, 2017:47). By doing so the EU seeks to operationalise the abstraction of the concept of solidarity as an integral part of the Union *acquis*, which must become one of the operational principles of EU public policies in further integration interventions. On the basis of empirical research, Soetkin Verhaegen (2016) draws certain conclusions linking solidarity with European identity.⁴ Citizens with a more pronounced 'European identity' are more prone to granting financial assistance to Member States than those with less pronounced European identity, meaning that European identity serves as a source of redistributive solidarity.

1.2. EU SOLIDARITY LIMITS: ENLARGEMENT POLICY

Solidarity does not exist in a vacuum, nor is it a universalist abstraction, it is always necessary to realise it in a concrete community and in a concrete territory. European solidarity does not differ in any way from the aforementioned matrix, in fact, it represents an "emotional glue for Europe" (Grabbe, 2006:43), but also

the limits of how far its forces reach. In addition to the common normative core, solidarity is determined "with frontiers erected against the outside world to preserve the relative homogeneity of the Western European industrial nations"(Böckenförde,2006:31). Due to various challenges and crises that go beyond EU borders and affect the periphery of neighbouring states, it is difficult to expect European solidarity to be hermetically closed within EU borders without certain forms of transgression. The EU agrees to such models of transgression solidarity precisely because of its efforts to portray itself as a "normative force" (Grimmel and My Giang, 2017:1). Therefore, in addition to solidarity between Member States, there is also "external solidarity" towards developing countries (Rupnik, 2006:90-91).⁵

Within this 'external solidarity', it is necessary to single out and clarify the form of solidarity that stems from the EU enlargement policy, and only for those countries that have the possibility of potential full membership. The basic weft of such reasoning is the understanding of solidarity as an act of Union openness to the membership of the Western Balkan countries, therefore, the expansion of the Union space in itself is an act of solidarity (Şipoş, 2020:4). Often, European solidarity in the pre-accession and accession phase is perceived through the process of financial giving with the conditioning of certain reform policies (Rupnik, 2006:87-88), which is an extremely loose foundation of common solidarity, because as former Polish President Lech Kaczyński pointed out, "but forget all forms of solidarity as soon as the issue becomes one of budgeting"(Kaczyński, 2006:135).

The inclusiveness in the European space of solidarity depends not so much on the readiness and will of the Object (Balkan states), but on the civilizational readiness and will of Europe to reabsorb it into its territorial order. "Solidarity is not a one-way street" (Grabbe, 2006:52), which means that new members must not abuse and use it as unconditional assistance, but must start from themselves and show how they can contribute to joint development and problem solving. ⁶ In any case, the principal openness of enlargement policy in itself remains as evidence of solidarity (Kovacs, 2006:75).

3 Max Pensky highlights the phenomenon of the 'solidarity gap', it is a disproportion between the real elements of solidarity within the community and those codified in the legal and political system. He states that the law alone cannot create solidarity, but at some point the loophole must be filled with legal solutions" (Pensky, 2008: 110-111.)

4 The methodological process of investigating citizens' attitudes was all about determining whether they were ready to agree to redistribution within the EU system in the name of a common identity. Verhaegen, 2016: 3).

5 Foreign policy determination of EU solidarity implies: "explicit solidarity on external relations, Article 24 meets in section 2 that "the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States"" (Beutler, 2017: 30).

6 „The wealthier European countries are not going to help the poorer ones simply out of idealism, but they must do so through a recognition that their self-interest is best served by pursuing common goals" (Grabbe, 2006: 51).

In the case of the Balkans, including B&H, reciprocity is lacking because B&H has nothing to offer the EU, except to tactfully detain immigrants in the current crisis situation. Solidarity based on mutual assistance and reciprocity excludes alms, as well as paternalism (Spade, 2020:141), and that is exactly what we have at work in B&H. The context of B&H's request for participation in the European solidarity model due to participation in the sharing of the burden of the migrant crisis can be placed in the theoretical concept of "border spectacle":

"The border spectacle sets a scene of 'ostensible exclusion', which in the 'purported naturalness' and necessity of exclusion may be demonstrated and legitimized—a spectacle which reifies migrant illegality and which extends the border regime far beyond the external borders" (Garcia Agustin and Jørgensen, 2019:8, according to de Genoa 2013).

B&H is the last zone in which this spectacle can be performed, as soon as they touch European soil migrants fall into a humanitarian discourse in which they must necessarily be humanized, even by force, and must not be waived any corps of guaranteed rights. In the foyer, such as B&H, this is not necessary, responsibility is left to the country to deal with itself and 'its migrants'.

To explain the complexity of the notion of solidarity, we use the so-called "critical approach to solidarity" (Beutler, 2017:22), which primarily studies the effects of solidarity or even more precisely under what conditions it actually works. In this notion, solidarity is transgressive and surpasses state boundaries, but it is not imposed as a universal model but as a concrete *ad hoc* model that can be developed on any spatial scale and include heterogeneous Subjects and Objects of solidarity. From the perspective of the EU, the problem of the migrant crisis and the burden of dealing with it borne by B&H is not in itself a credit, and there is no deeper identity circuit that would create an automatic moral obligation of solidarity action. On the contrary, such solidarity action is understood from the Union's perspective as a form of alms towards B&H, while from the reverse perspective of B&H, it is considered a duty of the Union since B&H bears the burden of the migrant crisis that it has not caused itself.

For this reason, it is important to determine the extent to which B&H citizens, who have had contact with the immigrant population in their local environments, believe that the EU has participated in solidarity in sharing the burden of the crisis, and helping B&H institutions to end it or at least alleviate it. In short, did the B&H citizens consider themselves as a part of the Union's solidarity action when it comes to managing the migrant crisis.

II

MIGRANT CRISIS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The migrant crisis in B&H actually began in 2018. Before that, it was primarily a sporadic and controlled entry of migrants into the territory of B&H, which was only a temporary transit route to the EU. (Mitrovic, 2019: 108) At the beginning of 2018, there was an increase in the number of migrants entering, as well as their longer-term stay on B&H territory due to the difficulty of entering the EU territory. The trend of illegal entry took an upward trajectory over the next two years. According to indicators at the time, at the end of October 2018, about 22,000 migrants were registered in B&H, and it was estimated that close to 5,000 were in B&H at the time. Almost all registered migrants fell into the category of so-called irregular migrants, that is, foreigners with unregulated status. (Mitrovic, 2019:108) The massive influx of migrants and the inability to cross the border into the EU created a zone where migrants stayed in anticipation of the chance to cross the border. However, this increased the number of incidents that began to create a relationship of distrust and fear among the domestic population and political actors.

As regards to local authorities' responses, the OSCE Mission concluded that all relevant local actors are insufficiently coordinated and prepared for the current situation with migrants and refugees in the country. Local police have not received adequate guidance on how to treat migrants., they have not received the training necessary to respond effectively to the challenges related to the migrant crisis, in particular cases relating to possible human trafficking or violence towards the migrant community. Finally, the prosecution and courts did not have adequate information on victims or perpetrators of crimes within the migrant population. (OSCE, 2018) In conclusion, B&H, with its institutional capacities, was incapable of dealing with a larger migrant wave. Several cantons in B&H felt the presence of migrants and the disorganization of politics, but the Una-Sana Canton was hit by far the hardest. The first and most obvious problem for the USK was the accommodation of migrants and refugees, which posed a major challenge for the authorities and international organizations in the canton. Most of the migrants were

accommodated in informal settlements in Bihać and Velika Kladuša. As the number of people in these settlements increased, living and hygienic conditions worsened. It is estimated that at the end of July 2018 there were over 4400 migrants and refugees in the Una-Sana Canton without formal accommodation and basic hygienic conditions. (OSCE, 2019: 13) In addition to accommodation, a major problem was the impairment of general security. That made the locals grow increasingly nervous, with several protests taking place in the canton due to the deteriorating situation and dissatisfaction with the authorities' responses. At one of the protests in Bihać, the protest leader issued a statement in which he tried to explain the motives of the protest and the relations between locals and migrants: "We have nothing against migrants or refugees, nothing against any man. We have already proven our humanity, but with this protest we are looking for some answers and solutions... Citizens have become insecure and frightened." (RadioSarajevo.ba, 2019) Another protester emphasized the responsibility of the authorities: "We are not satisfied with the actions of our mayor and we ask for his resignation. We believe he should have done more to protect us. But the state administration, it is superfluous to talk about them. The state didn't do anything, so we don't even have to talk about them. We in Bihać are exposed daily to excesses, fights, beatings, thefts and burglaries." (RadioSarajevo.ba, 2019). According to the latest data, in 2021 the influx of migrants to the territory of B&H decreased. That, of course, does not mean the problems with illegal migration ended, but it gives hope that the problems will decrease and that the state will be more willing to solve the problem.

Several conclusions can be drawn by analysing the situation in the field of migrations in the last three years. Firstly, the situation was extremely difficult at certain times, concerns came to the fore about the lack of ability of B&H to solve the larger migrant wave, and the implications of the crisis on internal political relations and on the social situation in an already poor and unstable country. Secondly, it is important to indicate

that the situation was not the same in every city. Although there have been incidents in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar, by far the most serious situation was in USK. Thirdly, it can be concluded that the local administration was not able to provide acceptable living conditions for migrants, the institutional mechanisms in charge of migration issues in B&H failed to fully organize and control the migration process, which is understandable given the lack of technical and human resources. It is clear that B&H has not been able to successfully handle larger refugee waves without serious and methodical assistance from external political actors. This is where we come to the role of the EU, which has been present but ultimately not fully successful in controlling the migrant crisis.

III

RHETORIC OF POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MIGRANT CRISIS

This chapter analyses the attitudes of political decision-makers towards EU action in the migrant crisis in B&H. The way decision-makers frame an issue of public interest – present it and interpret it – significantly influences how citizens understand the issue and shape their opinions. (Goren - Christopher – Kittlison, 2009:86) Therefore, it is taken into account that the views of officials can reflect or influence public opinion on a particular issue, in this case on migration to B&H. In order to offer a specific framework for analysing the attitudes of political officials towards the migrant crisis and EU actions, several questions need to be answered. First, what is the value orientation of political officials towards migration? Second, who do they hold responsible for any problems in the context of the refugee crisis? Third, what is the attitude of officials towards EU action in B&H during the migrant crisis?

The issue of value orientation is quite easy to decipher by following the public appearances of politicians. It is obvious that politicians expressed a predominantly negative value orientation towards the situation in the field of migration. A pronounced motive for a negative value orientation is a sort of desperation, the realization that there is not much that can be done at the local level. For example, the mayor of Bihać mentions terms such as "Sisyphus' job" to describe efforts to accommodate migrants, referring to the situation in the area of criminal activities as a "time bomb". Finally, he adds vividly: "I just act like it's an earthquake here. I did not cause it, I cannot stop it and we can just try to learn to live with it." (ba.n1info.com, 2021) It should be taken into account that these statements date back to July 2021. the year when the situation calmed down to a certain degree, which he himself admits. There is also a noticeable motive of fear of further escalation of the crisis, especially in the words of the Prime Minister of USK: "we have three years of migrant waves, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Nothing has been done about it. Now the citizens are aware that this will not stop tomorrow, but that this will take several years, that every year the arrival of migrants increases, the 24,000 we had in 2018, 49,000 in 2019, almost 30,000 have now come to

the canton during this period. Next year it will be 70,000" (Raport.ba, 2020). In any case, a negative value orientation towards the migration process is obvious, with visible elements of fear, despair and frustration in the public appearances of local politicians.

The second question concerns with the attribution of responsibility or guilt for the situation. To a significant extent, the rhetorical blade is aimed at higher levels within B&H. The blame is not put on the migrants themselves in a larger extent, nor the global movements, or the local population, but relatively openly the blame is placed on the backs of higher-level politicians. Such a relationship is not reserved only for the representatives of the most affected canton, but more or less all local representatives are synchronized in the opinion that entity and state governments have failed in this issue. Motives range from accusations of insufficient co-ordination, reluctance, neglect, all the way to improper behaviour by higher-level politicians. In general, local politicians explicitly attribute responsibility to higher levels within B&H. For example, the mayor of Hadžići municipality believes that crisis management is primarily the task of the "Council of Ministers of B&H, Federation of B&H, Canton of Sarajevo and at the very end of the Municipality of Hadžići" adding that "higher levels of government have left them in the lurch and put the burden of the migrant crisis on our shoulders". (Akta.ba, 2019) As for the attitude towards EU activities, it is important to emphasize that the EU is not acclaimed to be the main culprit in this situation. However, there is also a degree of caution towards the EU's intentions, primarily due to concerns that the EU will stop all migrants within the borders of B&H. Overall, the attitude of local politicians towards the EU is not negative, although there is a sense of distrust.

Unlike local officials, the FB&H prime minister creates a narrative that the migrant crisis is merely a reflection of global developments, not the actions of domestic political actors, with a belief that migration issues are not the responsibility of the entity authorities. Despite his moderate statements, he expressed a negative value

orientation towards the way migration takes place in the context of B&H. When it comes to the state level, members of the Presidency have different views on the entire situation, but they also share a concern due to increased migration in B&H. The fact is that all actors frame this crisis as a security issue, while the humanitarian component has remained on the side lines. They seem to differ only in the question of responsibility, and in the models of issue solving, because all actors agree that the problem emerges at the moment when migrants enter the country. What makes them different is the attitude towards the EU. While Komšić does not mention the EU in the context of the migrant crisis either as a positive actor or as the cause of the problem, Džaferović and Dodik see the EU's role each in their own way. Džaferović is more subtle in his narrative, but it can be read from his statements that he does not consider EU policy to be fair to B&H. Unlike other actors, Dodik is explicitly against migration, the deployment of migrants in RS, and against EU action in the migrant crisis: "Yes, these people are scum. The European Union takes the educated...and leaves us scum here," and added that the problem with illegal migration is an EU "hoax." (Jutarnji.hr, 2021) In conclusion, by analysing public statements by key political officials, it becomes clear that local politicians see the problem at higher levels, entity and state, while entity and state officials do not feel responsible for the problems that have arisen. Local politicians do not point at the EU as the culprit, but they also do not point at it as a factor capable of significant assistance. On the other hand, two members of the presidency recognize the blame in EU's activities and strategy.

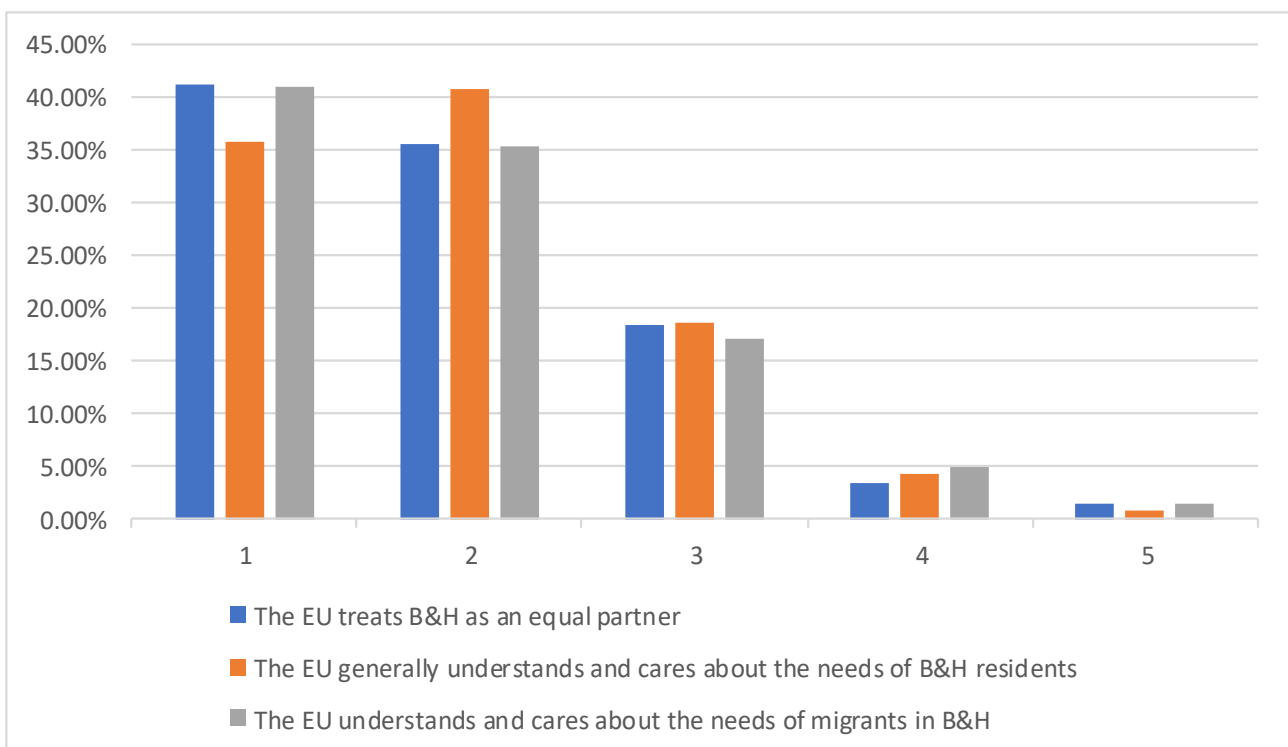
II

MIGRANT CRISIS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Despite the encouraging discourse of European officials and the general assistance in managing the migrant crisis, the question is whether there can be a complete trust in the European institutions or EU assistance among the population of B&H in the context of migrant crisis. This quantitative dimension of the analysis consists of analyses of the attitudes and perceptions of citizens in several critical local areas who most visibly experience all the risks and problems of the migrant crisis. The survey was conducted through a combination of personal interviews (face-to-face surveys) and an online survey, and the data collected consists of the attitudes of the local population in Sarajevo, Bihać, Tuzla and Mostar. A total of 864 respondents participated, evenly distributed throughout the cities. Specifically, 215 (24.88%) from Bihać, 220 (25.46%) from Mostar, 193 (22.34%) from Sarajevo, and 236 (27.31%) from Tuzla. Their systematisation and statistical processing showed certain tendencies in the perception of European solidarity in those who should have felt the latter as a direct help in solving the crisis.

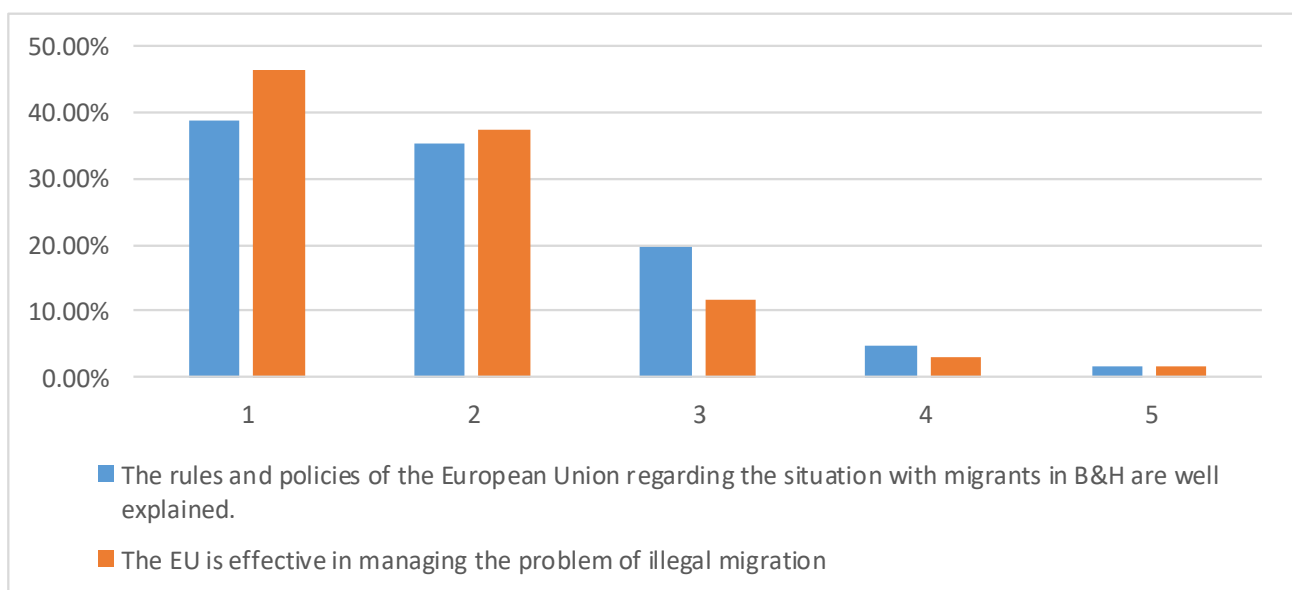
4.1. EUROPEAN UNION ASSISTANCE TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The first chart clearly shows the attitude of those polled on the EU's relationship with B&H as a country, the domestic population and towards the migrants themselves. First, it is obvious that the people questioned believe that the EU does not treat B&H as an equal partner. At first glance, the public may seem to think that the EU's relationship with B&H is unfair and marked by underestimation, but comments in the survey reveal a different picture as shown in the answer of one responder who indicated that she completely disagreed with the claim that the EU treats B&H as an equal partner, but then added: *"However, I am of the opinion that B&H institutions are not capable of matching the EU, just as they are not capable of dealing with the migrant crisis."* These comments are more of a reflection of the distrust and disillusionment of the population with the domestic political elites than a condemnation of the



EU's improper attitude towards the state. Secondly, the vast majority of those questioned feel that the EU does not understand and care about the needs of the domestic population in the context of the migrant crisis. Over 75% of those surveyed say that the EU is under-concerned about the needs of B&H residents. In general, people's dissatisfaction can be explained by an argument from conflict theory that "competition between groups of people for limited resources leads to stereotyping, antagonism and conflict" (Schofield, 2010:1). When the country in question is the one that does not have great resources, wealth and no real need for an influx of new labour, then the problems multiply. Thirdly, according to the answers, the public is also not satisfied with the EU's attitude towards migrants in B&H. Over three quarters of those surveyed believe that the EU does not understand the needs of migrants in B&H. It should be noted that in B&H there is not a vast criticism of the EU as a malicious actor, but rather the perception of the EU as an insufficiently coordinated and interested actor. The domestic population seems to see the EU as a slow-moving actor who fails to help, despite having some kind of moral obligation to do so.

protection of refugees at one critical moment quickly becomes protection from refugees. B&H, which bears the huge burden of the migrant crisis as a staging of the "border spectacle", therefore insists on a model of European solidarity. Through the process of Europeanisation of immigrant policy, which implies the intensification of relations with the EU, in the case of countries such as B&H, the EU often reduces it to "importing" migration policies from the EU without socialisation, and EU obtains the consent of those countries due to their financial instruments and/or the reward of progress in pre-accession negotiations, but also with possible sanctions for the "disobedient". Therefore, if the key mechanisms for the Europeanisation of this policy are external incentives and social learning (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004) the non-member states expect the EU to find more innovative solutions for more efficient crisis management so they could accumulate them and learn from them. And what does Europe do at the moment according to the research? It offers a cold logic of law, norms and calls for coexistence in the restless periphery using the instruments of surveillance, assistance and coercion.

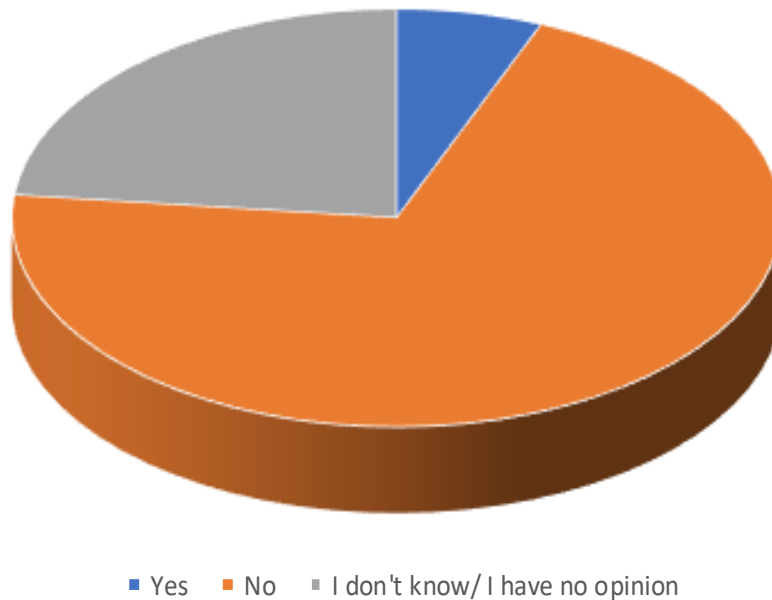


The results of the survey suggest that the vast majority of respondents (83.8%) think the EU is inefficient with the issue of migrants. One responder from Bihać explained in more detail: "If they solved the issues efficiently, the situation would not be as it has been for the last four years. Catastrophic, where the people of B&H suffer, especially the Una-Sana Canton." This pessimism is not unreasonable, as the EU's inconsistent asylum and migration policies cause distrust and the wobble of its members hampers the view of the EU as one single unit. Despite solidarity and cooperation as explicit postulates, the migrant crisis has shown that the

When resorting to the latter instrument, it often hides behind the Member States (Laidi, 2013:180).

Respondents are mostly of the opinion that the EU does not help B&H equally as it helps its members (70.60% of respondents). It is therefore possible to draw the conclusion that respondents agree that a more inclusive approach towards EU non-member aid is needed. In addition to the financial, the EU offers legal, political and operational assistance to its members in managing the migrant crisis. Its members who are most immediately affected by the migrant crisis insist on European

The EU helps B&H as much as it does Member States in the context of the migrant crisis



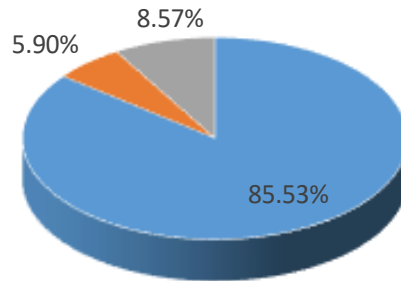
solidarity above all and on a quota system under which the core of the Union would accept an agreed number of migrants and relieve the outer layer, to which financial instruments are no longer sufficient. By contrast, non-member assistance is mainly based on humanitarian assistance and financial support. Despite the main donor role, or precisely because of the material assistance spent on short-term solutions while improvisations perpetuated the crisis, EU assistance is considered insufficient by respondents. The issue is likely to be seen as a zero-sum game in which B&H wins only if the number of migrants decreases in favour of increasing the number in the EU. 59.21% of respondents disagree, while only 8.57% agree with the claim that the EU has provided financial assistance to states to better cope with the migrant wave and that this financial assistance is sufficient and well distributed. Lapidary explanation was offered by one respondent, saying: "It made it possible, but I would disagree that it was sufficient." Another respondent believes that the funds "are allocated but not well distributed", which corresponds with the opinion of some other respondents. It is therefore possible to conclude that the contribution of financial assistance brings slight changes to the outcomes and quality of the management of the migrant crisis. According to the EU's official website, more than 88 million Euros were given to B&H dedicated to the assistance to migrants between 2018 and 2021. It is symptomatic that the transfer, whether the initiator is

an EU body or an individual Member State, went through the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (slobodnaevropa.org, 2021). Figures show that it really does matter which side of the EU border you find yourself in during the crisis. But while the Mediterranean countries from the inside of the EU border (Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Italy and Spain) feel as the financial aid packages are an insufficient expression of European solidarity, countries on the other side of the border insist on more financial assistance since they must defend the Union from itself and its "open door to unwanted guests" policy.

4.2. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

An extremely high percentage of respondents expressed some form of dissatisfaction with EU's action through the form of assistance for B&H in dealing with the migrant crisis. This is greatly contributed to by the fact that the migrant crisis is essentially a "European problem", i.e. that the migrants saw B&H as a short-term stage towards their final destination – EU countries. Respondents implied that the migrant crisis would activate European solidarity mechanisms and facilitate the position of B&H, especially those local communities that have borne the greatest burden of the crisis. Even the financial assistance was not perceived as an act of

The EU should help B&H more in the context of the migrant crisis



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know/I have no opinion

solidarity, but as a form of protection of the member states. Undoubtedly, European solidarity towards 'peripheral areas' is mainly perceived through an asymmetric relationship of funding, and technical or administrative assistance, however, the problem is that there is no awareness raised among recipient countries (solidarity facilities) that solidarity is not one-dimensional and a one-way street. In other words, they do not embed in their expectations that the EU expects activities that will create a framework for joint development and resolution of common problems, while preventing the abuse of the assistance that the EU delivers. As difficult as it may be to accept, conditionality is an integral part of European solidarity. The problem for B&H citizens is not the asymmetry of solidarity or the paternalistic position that the EU holds in such relations, they even desire it, but in the absence of any awareness that transgressive solidarity should be earned and invested in solving concrete common problems. In strictly technical terms, such a negative attitude of citizens can be described as a disappointment because of their lack of satisfaction with the demand to share the accumulated solidarity of the European political community.

Also, the vast majority of respondents believe that the EU needs to explain its plans and projections regarding immigrants more openly, rather than, as one respondent argued, "that it closes their borders and keeps them in one country that is not stable enough for its residents, let alone migrants." This does not claim that there are strictly defined limits to solidarity and an airtight community that inherits it, but there are indeed concentric circles of broadcasting the forces of solidarity and it is possible to discern them. In the particular case of B&H and the migrant crisis, it was proven to be the border area of how far the intensity of European solidarity emission goes. B&H has remained its capacity

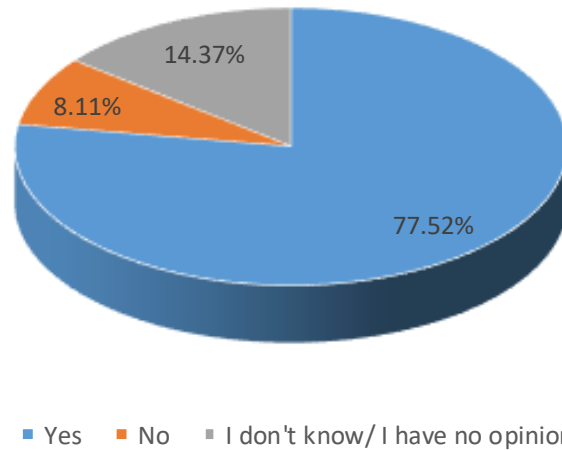
as a foyer of European solidarity, only sporadically feeling the forces of solidarity in reality, and of course, never on the scale in which the local population expects it. This should be added to the principal rhetoric of European officials who have consistently expressed concern and support for B&H in dealing with the migrant crisis.

Despite the expressed disillusionment of citizens with the Union regarding aid, but also the overall process of managing the migrant crisis, the majority of respondents believe that it remains a key actor that needs to take on and address future migrant challenges at its institutional level. This indicates that the problem of migration is understood as genuinely European and that the ultimate responsibility should be borne by Brussels, but also that only the EU as such has the institutional and political capacity to cope with and regulate mass migration. This means that the countries of the periphery in relation to the EU, such as B&H, regardless of all, show a certain form of trust in the transgression of European solidarity, i.e. its geographical spill over. However, for them, the EU is a geopolitical normative force that, in addition to the strength of attractiveness, possesses internal capacities to absorb major emergencies or at least facilitate them, even beyond its borders. The openness of the 'enlargement policy' in countries such as B&H appears as an act of solidarity in itself, that is, a certain form of selfless sacrifice of the current Member States. Enlargement is a symbolic sign of good will to integrate and use the previously established pool of European solidarity by potentially joining the EU. The problem with this understanding of solidarity is the absence of reciprocity, because B&H has nothing to offer the Union, except to be a temporary space for detaining and slowing down immigrants. If reciprocity is absent, then solidarity becomes a one-way asymmetric process of the

will of the subject and the acceptance of the object of solidarity. If there is no reciprocity, then solidarity turns into alms.

institutions. This points to temporary 'solidarity out of necessity' rooted in moral forces rather than a common identity or political framework. The recurrent problem

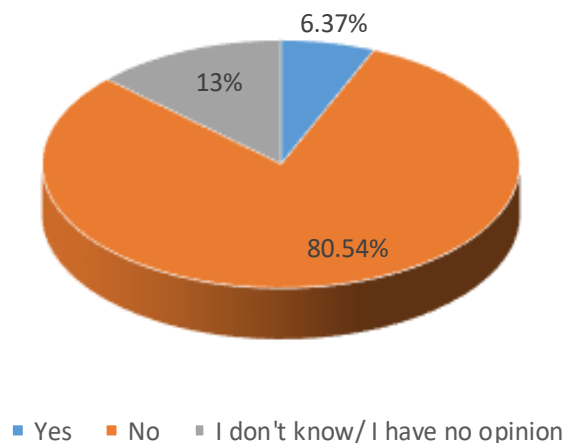
The EU should accept migrants stationed in B&H who are headed to Western European countries



A distinct majority of respondents believe that the EU can solve the crisis by opening its borders and letting the immigrants enter the territories of the Member States. This would relieve B&H, especially the local communities on whose territory the migrant camps are located, of the massive influx and potential major humanitarian problems we have witnessed so far. The problem with the current situation and the role of solidarity in it is that any form of its perception is reduced to a constellation of heterogeneous actors with the aim of helping the afflicted people as a humanitarian issue, but with little or no institutional attachment especially to the EU

can be solved by taking on the responsibility of the solidarity subject (EU) – letting the immigrants enter, and until then the crisis must be mitigated by the institutional connection between the EU and the competent institutions and levels of government within B&H. If such a connection is not clearly visible to citizens or its effects are not felt in the life of local communities, then it is quite clear whom the citizens will hold accountable and with whom will they be disappointed as indicated by the previous charts. The key to understanding the core of the problem is "were the B&H citizens considered a part of the Union's solidarity action when it comes to

The presence of migrants is good for our country



managing the migrant crisis?" From the perspective of the European Union, the burden of dealing with the migrant crisis does not require a moral obligation, nor is B&H's actions in itself a merit that requires reciprocity of the Union's activities. On the contrary, such action is substituted by the activism of the whole set of actors as a humanitarian problem, not a political circuit of solving a common problem. On the other hand, B&H citizens consider the problem to be precisely common, and the aggravating circumstances of crisis management need to be resolved politically, and the final unravelling of the problem lies in taking responsibility by the EU and accepting all immigrants.

It is quite clear that respondents from local communities who had the direct presence of immigrants on their territory are negative when it comes to their more permanent stay. In the initial stages of migrant flows, these same citizens showed an extremely high degree of empathy, understanding and direct assistance to the afflicted people. Back then, the whole process was really perceived as the narrative of the humanitarian crisis with a special focus on Syrian refugees. However, this humanitarian aspect also had an 'expiration date', because in fact no one expected the constant presence of mass migration, and the complete absence of a coordinated policy towards migrants within B&H. Over time, the humanitarian aspect receded in the face of the daily problems of local communities, and with the absence of a sense of state crisis management, in some ways they considered themselves to be left on their own. International actors did not impress too much in helping local communities, and all assistance coming in was not perceived as sufficient or as a relief to local authorities. In fact, there was a dominant belief that this was a form to make profit for foreign organizations and activists. Citizens began to perceive their cities as training grounds for accommodating large numbers of immigrants, and at the same time as a source of profit for foreign participants. Furthermore, the whole story was inflicted by a security aspect that reached grand proportions in certain areas, where people feared for their own safety. No sense of protection by domestic institutions was sufficient, and the multitude of immigrants, dissatisfied with the fact of the Union's closed borders, expressed dissatisfaction in inappropriate ways. All that combined resulted in prominent attitudes of the respondents. The classic requirement of a particular community for so-called 'social solidarity' towards the European Union is simply not operationalised. The fears and insecurity of the local population remained a local problem, not even Bosnia and Herzegovina's. Thus, the feelings of the population could not be generalized, thus making disappointment and frustration more and more significant. After a certain amount of time, it was quite clear that B&H remains pinned to the periphery of European solidarity.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to answer a question about the perception of European solidarity in the B&H public due to the migrant crisis. In order to put this question in the appropriate context, the institutional framework of B&H's migrant policy was presented, and the situation in B&H in the wake of the migrant crisis, especially in the USK, because the situation there was the most complicated. The second segment of the study is the analysis of the rhetoric of key decision makers at the local, entity and state level. It has been established that there are several features of the rhetoric of political leaders in B&H in relation to the migrant wave. First, politicians expressed a predominantly negative value orientation towards the state of migration. In the rhetoric of local politicians, the expressed motive for negative value orientation is a form of desperation, the realization that not much can be done at the local level, while at higher levels there have been talks of global developments, and equally, with some degree of lethargy, the realization that there is not much they can do in this situation. Second, local politicians hold higher levels of the country accountable, while higher levels blame the EU or some global developments in general. The final part offered answers to several indicative questions, but the most important thing in conclusion is to explain the answers to two questions. First, what is the perception of the B&H public about the EU's relationship towards B&H in general, its inhabitants, and migrants who have found themselves in the country in the last three years. Second, what is the public opinion on proclaimed European solidarity and towards the EU in general after the migrant wave. As for the first question, respondents believe that the EU does not treat B&H as an equal partner, but it is also understandable because in fact the two entities are not equal. More devastatingly, respondents in the vast majority feel that the EU does not understand and care about the needs of the domestic population, but also of the migrants themselves in the context of the migrant crisis. Apparently, more EU engagement and presence was expected among the B&H population, but the population does not seem to be satisfied with the overall

EU contribution in this area. As for the second one, as much as the migrant crisis has shaken the EU politically, led to internal differences, friction, even open conflicts, and pointed to the unsustainability of certain administrative structures, such as asylum management policies, it has nevertheless remained arguably the most important political actor with exceptional strength of attraction. The principal openness and continuation of enlargement policy is a crucial source of feeling among citizens that even beyond the borders of the Union, its solidarity should be effective. By contrast, citizens in locally affected communities have felt a certain form of betrayal and hypocritical conversion of their places into temporary hot spots that need to slow down and regulate the smooth flow of migrants into the Union. Considering everything, the narrative framework of the 'humanitarian crisis' is no longer valid with citizens of locally affected areas. The continued presence of migrants has developed a form of frustration, distrust of higher levels of government, as well as suspicion of international aid, especially of the financial type. Their views are a real indicator of the dysfunctionality of the state apparatus of B&H, but also of the permanent presence and hope that accession to the Union will profoundly alter this situation.

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