Abstract

The humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe of 2015-2016 has revealed several unfinished elements and shortcomings in current EU policies and approaches to migration, asylum and borders, particularly those applying in southern EU maritime borders and frontier states in the Mediterranean. This book provides a critical examination of the main issues and lessons learned from this crisis and gives an up-to-date assessment of the main policy, legal and institutional responses that have been put in place at the EU level. It further examines the extent to which these responses can be expected to work under the current system of sharing responsibilities among EU member states in assessing asylum applications and ensuring a consistent implementation of EU legal standards that comply with the rule of law and fundamental rights. This report is based on original research and draws upon the existing literature, along with the discussions of a CEPS Task Force that met over six months, under the chairmanship of Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) at Sciences Po and former Prime Minister of Italy. The rapporteurs offer specific recommendations and possible scenarios for policy optimisation and assess the extent to which the establishment of a European Border and Asylum Service (EBAS) could address the current gaps and challenges in EU and member states’ migration policies.
According to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, illegal border crossing at the EU external borders increased sharply in 2013, rising to over 107,000 from 75,000 in 2012, with Syrians, Eritreans and Afghans being the most commonly detected nationalities (Frontex 2014). The increase continued in 2014 to over 204,542 arrivals in Italy and Greece (IOM 2016b). A recent report by the IOM concludes that the Mediterranean Sea continues to greatly outweigh other routes. One of the challenges of doing research on issues related to migration, particularly irregular migration, is definitions as there is hardly any consensus on defining certain concepts. Grant (2011) addresses directly the gap in the literature on border control policies and fatalities. The European Union has several migration policy programmes in place and, in addition to the Commission and the Member States, several EU agencies play key roles in supporting the internal and external dimensions of migration management. EU funding is mainly channelled through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) (CJIP 2016). Allocations in the area of migration and asylum include AB 1 and DAB 2-3 (2016). They clearly faced conceptual and practical challenges, ranging from cooperating with both the local and national level authorities of the hosting Member States, to financing the deployment of EU agency staff, and setting up offices (with the appropriate infrastructure) in remote areas. 6 5. Towards a Semi-military European Border and Coast Guard? 8 6. Concluding Remarks 10 Annex: Article 7 a. Tasks 12. 1. Nevertheless, the European Agenda adopts a holistic approach to migration which aims to respond to the immediate need to save lives and address emergency situations, tackle the root causes of irregular migration (CJIP 2015). The CSDP military operation in the South Central Mediterranean was given a mandate to identify, capture and dispose of vessels as well as enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers (CJIP 2015). Until February 2016 the response to the refugee crisis was completely managed by the EU.