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Document 1

EU pressed to rethink immigration policy after Lampedusa tragedy

European commissioner calls for EU rescue mission for migrants spanning entire Mediterranean from Spain to Cyprus

- **Ian Traynor** theguardian.com, Tuesday 8 October 2013
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The European Union has come under pressure to revamp its immigration policies in the wake of the Lampedusa tragedy that led to the deaths of 274 people in Italian waters last week. The European commission told a meeting of interior ministers in Luxembourg that more had to be done at the EU level to control mass immigration, legal and illegal. Reacting specifically to the Lampedusa boat sinking in Italian waters between Tunisia and Malta, Cecilia Malmström, the commissioner for interior affairs, called for an EU rescue mission spanning the entire Mediterranean.

The project would be entrusted to Frontex, the EU's borders agency, with the aim of tracking, identifying and if need be rescuing boatloads of migrants leaving north Africa for southern Europe. Malmström said the project should stretch from Spain to Cyprus. It was not stated if the proposed patrols would also be used to chase boats back to where they came from.

But interior ministers from the 28 governments showed little inclination to respond to the Lampedusa tragedy or to the Syrian refugee crisis by agreeing a more open or generous policy.

National governments jealously guard their sovereign authority over immigration issues and are unlikely to surrender powers to Brussels or pool decision-taking in the foreseeable future, despite the shame of the Lampedusa tragedy, which is the biggest single loss of life involving Mediterranean "boat people".

Italy is clamouring for greater solidarity from other EU states in trying to cope with the number of migrants coming across the Mediterranean. "Municipalities like ours cannot be left alone on the frontline," wrote the mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini, in an open appeal. "The Mediterranean represents the Africa-Europe border, not the Africa-Italy border," Angelino Alfano, the Italian interior minister, told parliament in Rome in the wake of the disaster.

But the German interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, signalled on Tuesday that Berlin was in no mood to relax the rules on immigration. Germany recently agreed to take 5,000 temporary refugees from Syria, criticised widely as a paltry figure. But the Germans point out that they had more than four times the number of asylum-seekers that Italy had last year. According to Eurostat, the EU statistics agency, Germany had more than 77,000 asylum seekers last year while Italy had under 16,000.

Echoing the debate in Britain about asylum seekers and immigrants as "benefit scroungers", Friedrich said that most of those trying to cross the Mediterranean were "economic" migrants rather than political refugees and that they were seeking better social security than they would receive at home.

The emphasis of the meeting in Luxembourg was on stemming the flow rather than liberalising entry rules, by discussing further aid to, for example, Lebanon or Turkey, which are struggling under the burden of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Syria.

Meanwhile, a 35-year old Tunisian man was arrested on Tuesday on suspicion of piloting the migrant boat that caught fire and sank within sight of Lampedusa last Thursday.

Khaled Ben Salem was identified by survivors as one of the "white men" who escorted the 500 passengers, most of them Eritrean, from a warehouse in Libya to a beach at Misrata, where they were packed on to the boat for the two-day crossing.

He was previously deported in April after piloting another migrant boat to Italy. He now risks being charged with multiple homicide, with some passengers claiming he started the fire on board the boat, Italian media reports said.

On Tuesday, Italian deep sea divers continued emptying the interior of the sunken ship of the dozens of corpses still packed into it. The number of bodies recovered rose to 274, including 81 women, while only six women were among the survivors.

A Vatican spokesman said Pope Francis had decided to donate an unspecified sum of money to each of the 155 survivors of the disaster, who are slowly being moved from a migrant holding centre on Lampedusa.

Migrants still held on the island protested on Tuesday about conditions at the camp, throwing mattresses over the fence of the centre and trying to block departing buses.

"The extreme situation at the centre has deteriorated, with entire families forced into the open for three days in the rain in a row. It is absolutely unacceptable," said Lauren Jolles, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative in Italy.

Document 2

Europe's immigration challenge

Migration is changing in fundamental ways, and we must continue to push ourselves to devise systems and approaches that respond to new realities

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- Adapted from Peter D Sutherland and Cecilia Malmstrom theguardian.com, Tuesday 24 July 2012
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Europe faces an immigration predicament. Mainstream politicians, held hostage by xenophobic parties, adopt anti-immigrant rhetoric to win over fearful publics, while the foreign-born are increasingly marginalised in schools, cities, and at the workplace. Yet, despite high unemployment across much of the continent, too many employers lack the workers they need. Engineers, doctors, and nurses are in short supply; so, too, are farmhands and health aides. And Europe can never have enough entrepreneurs, whose ideas drive economies and create jobs.

The prevailing scepticism about immigration is not wholly unfounded. Many communities are genuinely polarised, which makes Europeans understandably anxious. But to place the blame for this on immigrants is wrong, and exacerbates the problem. We are all at fault.

By not taking responsibility, we allowed immigration to become the scapegoat for a host of other, unrelated problems. The enduring insecurity caused by the global economic crisis, Europe's existential political debates, and the rise of emerging powers is too often expressed in reactions against migrants. Not only is this unjust, but it distracts us from crafting solutions to the real problems.

European countries must finally and honestly acknowledge that, like the US, Canada, and Australia, they are lands of immigrants. The percentage of foreign-born residents in several European countries – including Spain, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece – is similar to that in the US.

Yet, despite this, we do not make the necessary investments to integrate newcomers into our schools and workplaces. Nor have we done enough to reshape our public institutions to be inclusive and responsive to our diverse societies. The issue is not how many new immigrants are accepted into the EU, but acknowledging the nature and composition of the societies in which we already live.

It is ironic – and dangerous – that Europe's anti-immigrant sentiment is peaking just when global structural changes are fundamentally shifting migration flows. The most important transformation is the emergence of new poles of attraction. Entrepreneurs, migrants with PhDs, and those simply with a desire to improve their lives are flocking to places such as Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico, China, and India. In the coming decade, most of the growth in migration will take place in the global south. The west is no longer the "Promised Land", placing at risk Europe's ability to compete globally.

The ageing of Europe's population is historically unprecedented. The number of workers will decline precipitously, and could shrink by almost one-third by mid-century, with immense consequences for Europe's social model, the vitality of its cities, its ability to innovate and compete, and for relations among generations as the old become heavily reliant on the young. And, while history suggests that countries that welcome newcomers' energy and vibrancy compete best internationally, Europe is taking the opposite tack by tightening its borders.

But all is not lost. Europe got itself into this situation through a combination of inaction and short-sighted policymaking. This leaves considerable room for improvement. In fact, there are rays of hope in certain corners of Europe.

Consider Sweden, which has transformed its immigration policy by allowing employers to identify the immigrant workers whom they need (the policy has built-in safeguards to give preference to Swedish and EU citizens). In more rational times, these reforms would be the envy of Europe, especially given the relative resilience of Sweden's economy.

Equally important is international co-operation on migration. Last year, during the Arab revolutions, the EU missed a historic opportunity to begin weaving together the two sides of the Mediterranean. It failed to open its doors to young students, entrepreneurs, and other North Africans. Today, the EU is making a more serious effort to engage its southern neighbourhood. Among the potential opportunities are free-trade agreements, an easing of visa requirements for university students, temporary work programmes, and incentives to attract entrepreneurs.

No country is an island when it comes to migration, and none can address it alone. We have a long way to go, probably in a climate that will not turn favourable to immigration for many years. How much progress we can make will hinge on our ability to break through the myths about migration.

Migration is changing in fundamental ways, and we must continue to push ourselves to devise systems and approaches that respond to new realities. If we succeed, human mobility can become one of the great assets of the 21st century.

Peter Sutherland, chairman of Goldman Sachs International and the London School of Economics, and a UN special representative for migration and development, was director general of the World Trade Organisation, EU commissioner for competition, and attorney general of Ireland. Cecilia Malmstrom is EU commissioner for home affairs and was Sweden's minister for Europe.

Document 3

Lampedusa tragedy: migrants to Europe need more than sympathy

While the UK government has stuck to spending 0.7% of the budget on overseas aid, our tough line on immigration sends a different message

○ **Hugh Muir** theguardian.com, Friday 4 October 2013

In all the coverage today of the sinking of the migrant boat off the coast of Italy – and with up to 300 dead, there will be a lot of it – one quote needs to stay at the forefront. "This is not an Italian tragedy, this is a European tragedy," said Italy's interior minister Angelino Alfano as he arrived on the island of Lampedusa. "Lampedusa has to be considered the frontier of Europe, not the frontier of Italy."

Italy says it is facing a continual problem with these boats, as the ambitions of thousands who want to make a life for themselves are commandeered by the ambitions of crooks and traffickers willing and able to make a quick buck. Neither phenomenon will abate of its own accord.

There will be more days like this, more tragedies in places such as Lampedusa. The last decade saw welcome growth in the developing world as poor countries, principally India and China surged, taking 620 million out of poverty compared with 1990 and the UN's millennium development goals helped galvanise international institutions. But the improvement has been patchy. Even in those countries where poverty has been impacted, many who have been pulled out of officially classified poverty remain vulnerable in terms of living and social conditions. They may not die of poverty, but it's no way to live.

And what are we doing about this constant and inevitable knocking at the door of Europe? How do we reflect the truth that an undeveloped population – blessed or perhaps cursed with modern communications – will strike out for a better life in the developed world. We confront the problem with an unedifying hotchpotch of neuroses and political spasms that ensure we never truly see it in the round, never discuss it rationally and never get to grips with it.

David Cameron is to be hailed for sticking to his guns and allocating 0.7% of the budget to aid but let us never forget the drumbeat of rage and derision that envelops him all the while because of this, his most domestically unpopular policy position. "We're the mugs of the world, we're spending money we haven't got," complained Tory MP Philip Davies in June, reflecting a body of opinion that will no doubt be shocked today but won't begin to link what we do in the world with the wider goal of preventing more migrant tragedies.

Many who shout loudest in our ruling coalition make it pretty clear that they don't like sending our money abroad. Neither do they seem comfortable having more migrants here. If the Lampedusa boat had landed safely, the next wave of stories would have warned of the hordes now heading across Europe; destination Britain. Those who arrived might have found themselves being urged to leave again by Theresa May's immigration vans.

And through our shortsightedness, we aren't even making sure that developing countries can help themselves. The Lampedusa boats were filled with Somalians and Eritreans, and yet right now Somalians in Britain face the loss of the mechanism whereby they were able to help relatives in their home country by sending home millions of pounds in remittances. Barclays is withdrawing from the market for fear of being accused of funding terrorism. Ministers know the decision will be ruinous – in Somalia particularly – but neither they nor Barclays nor the regulatory authorities can summon the courage or the vision to do anything about it.

So that's the migrant quandary – we are damned by the right for sending aid, damned if migrants come here and there are limits on the extent to which they can help themselves. Let us grieve, but let us not puzzle as to why they take to the boats.

Document 4



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