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Conference on
***“A comprehensive humanitarian and political response
to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe”***

*Organised by the PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
in co-operation with the PACE Parliamentary Project Support Division*

Wednesday, 16 December 2015

Report

National Assembly, Salle Lamartine

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MORNING SESSION

Opening session

Opening of the Conference by **Mr Thierry Mariani**, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the PACE.

Statement by **Ms Anne Brasseur**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Statement by **Mr Rolf Wenzel**, Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Concerns and possible short/medium term solutions

Moderator: **Mr Jacques Attali**

Panel composed of representatives of relevant committees of national parliaments:

- ✓ **Mr Amjad Majali**, Member of the Parliament of Jordan and former Minister of Labour
- ✓ **Mr Georgios Pallis**, Member of the Committee on Public Administration, Public Order and Justice of the Parliament of Greece
- ✓ **Mr Meho Omerović**, Chairperson, Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia
- ✓ **Ms Lotta Finstorp**, Member of the Social Insurance Committee of the Parliament of Sweden

The following persons spoke in the discussion:

- **Mr Gert Westerveen**, Representative of the UNHCR to the European Institutions in Strasbourg
- **Ms Annette Groth**, Member of the Parliament of Germany
- **Mr Konstantinos Tsiaras**, Member of the Parliament of Greece, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **Ms Nezha El Ouafi**, Member of the Chamber of Representatives of Morocco
- **Mr Manlio Di Stefano**, Member of the Parliament of Italy
- **Ms Najat Al-Astal**, Member of the Parliament and Council of Palestine

- **Ms Sahiba Gafarova**, Member of the Parliament of Azerbaijan
- **Ms Maria Luisa Silva**, Director, UNDP Office in Geneva
- **Mr Jean-Marie Heydt**, President of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe
- **Mr Žarko Obradović**, Member of the Parliament of Serbia
- **Mr Husnija Šabović**, Member of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of Montenegro
- **Ms Maja Gasal Vrazalica**, Member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mr Killion Munyama**, Member of the Parliament of Poland
- **Mr El Mokhtar Ghambou**, member of the House of Representatives of Morocco

Statements made in languages other than French are transcribed on the basis of the interpretation and are preceded by an asterisk

Opening of the Conference by Mr Thierry Mariani, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the PACE

Mr Thierry Mariani, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the PACE – I wish to thank all the participants from the Council of Europe member states, whether parliamentarians or other, as well as the non-member participants who have been working with us for many years, in particular all those who have links with the Council of Europe through the Partnership for Democracy.

I wish to thank the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Anne Brasseur, for organising this conference on a subject which, I am sad to say, remains all too topical.

I also wish to thank all the speakers who are going to give us an overview of the situation on the ground in the various countries represented. This will help us in our common search for a solution that is both workable and effective.

Lastly, I wish to thank the two moderators, Jacques Attali and Guy Goodwin-Gill, for agreeing to give us the benefit of their expertise, experience and intelligence in addressing the issue of migration and in trying to come up with a humanitarian and political response.

I should also tell you that yesterday we received a message from the Speaker of the French National Assembly, saying he would be unable to join us today for health reasons. He was not at yesterday's National Assembly session either.

As I said, therefore, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to Anne Brasseur who, thanks to her willingness to take a stand and her tireless efforts over the two years that she has been president, has managed to make the PACE's voice heard at the highest level in every country. I also want to welcome the President of the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, Jean-Marie Heydt, and the Chairman of the Governing Board and the Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank, one of whose tasks, since its inception in 1956, has been to come to the aid of migrants and refugees, a mission that has taken on special significance recently given that solidarity must be backed by funds if it is to have a full and tangible impact.

Lastly, I wish to thank the representatives of the other international organisations present here today, the United Nations, with the World Food Programme, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR.

Ladies and gentlemen. We are currently seeing the biggest influx of refugees and migrants into Europe in decades. Nearly 900,000 people arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean in 2015, four times more than the previous year. All these refugees and migrants arriving in Europe require protection, including for their fundamental rights. The tragic events that took place on 13 November last year, however, have helped create a situation where migrants are equated with terrorism.

We currently find ourselves facing challenges on a number of fronts: humanitarian, economic, social and security-related. On top of this, there are other issues related to reception, resettlement and the division of responsibilities with regard to these new migrants. It is not only the immediate problems that need tackling, however. Medium- and long-term solutions need to be found as well.

Aside from the fact that everyone wants to live in a community that is safe and respects people's basic rights, the main question is how to establish and ensure security and respect for human rights in the countries of origin, so as to avoid further massive influxes in the future. This would also help to save human lives given that the individuals fleeing from threats and insecurity in their homelands regularly run enormous risks. I am thinking in particular of those who set out to sea in the flimsiest of boats. It is a story that has become sadly familiar.

This conference will, I hope, promote discussion and allow us to draw on our different experiences to explore together the kind of measures that need to be taken so that people can stay in their own countries and be safe there.

Today's conference should also, however, give us an opportunity to address the issue of support for those host countries which, because of where they are situated and their proximity to war zones, are having to

bear the brunt of the refugee problem. I am thinking in particular of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and others which are in the front line, as it were. I am delighted, incidentally, to see representatives of these countries in this room today, people who will be able to enlighten us about the situation as it stands at present.

Today's conference is also an excellent opportunity to share opinions and discuss the various positions at a parliamentary level so that we can then go back to our respective governments with proposals regarding a common stance on sharing responsibilities and protecting Europe's external borders.

One of the key issues has to do with harmonising the rules on determining the status of refugees, to ensure that only those who need refugee status can claim it.

Another topic that we could explore is the return of migrants who have been rejected. What can be done to ensure their safety when they return to their country of origin? And to monitor the situation after they return? These are some of the questions which have not yet been satisfactorily addressed.

Some thought could also be given to introducing procedures for identifying people who meet the requirements for legal entry into Europe, in order to save the lives of the many who might otherwise be tempted to use irregular migration routes. These procedures could be considered a first step towards processing applications for asylum and refugee status outside Europe.

A significant tightening of the selection process for people eligible for legal entry into Europe based on humanitarian grounds could nevertheless be a big step in this direction.

Lastly, without mentioning all of them, I think that the issue of integration is paramount and I welcome the fact that the Council of Europe and, more specifically, the Parliamentary Assembly have already made substantial efforts in this area. We could draw on this work in our future thinking.

As you can see, the Council of Europe and hence the Migration Committee, are very well placed to act as a platform for this political dialogue. The Migration Committee includes among its members representatives of countries of origin and transit and host countries. Palestine, Morocco and Kyrgyzstan already have partner for democracy status and Jordan is set to obtain it soon. We also have working relations and co-operative ties with Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia and Jordan.

Ladies and gentlemen. You will find in your files a compendium of the latest resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. As you will see, the most recent reports are on topical issues directly related to the current migration crisis. These texts concern transit countries, the Dublin Regulation and the action to be taken in the wake of the tragedy in the Mediterranean no less than the issue of Syrian refugees and ways of ensuring successful integration of migrants in Europe.

The subject of our conference is very much in line with the terms of reference of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons which I have the privilege to chair. For those of you who are not familiar with the committee's work and its own particular activities, I would also like to point out that the Assembly is extremely responsive to the requests it receives from the various countries. Consider, for example, the request from the Greek authorities to send a delegation to Kos at short notice so that parliamentarians could witness the refugee crisis at first hand. Or the visit to Lampedusa, following which our members raised the alarm among the international community.

I would also like to refer to the parliamentary campaign conducted by the Assembly as part of the UN's Global Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the parliamentarians on the Committee for their responsiveness and their willingness to assist. I hope that they will take an active part in the conference and tell us about what they have witnessed.

Ladies and gentlemen. The goals of this conference are clear from its title: namely to identify and contribute to framing a "comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis". That is quite an ambition, but fortunately we have international instruments, mechanisms and agreements that we can draw on to develop transfrontier co-operation on a global scale.

Recent developments mean that the European Union is currently engaged in a process of reflection and will shortly be presenting Member States with proposals for practical solutions.

The tragic events that have occurred have revealed the inadequacy of the resources deployed thus far. I hope today's conference will give us a chance to explore and find new ways of responding to the current crisis and to draw up a road map for future action by our parliaments and institutions, while bearing in mind the need to avoid equating migrants with terrorists.

Thank you for your attention.

I now call on our President to give the first presentation. Ms Brasseur, you have the floor.

**Statement by Ms Anne Brasseur,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Ms Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I would firstly like to thank the National Assembly for once more welcoming us in its premises. The Council of Europe has an office on Avenue Kléber, but it would have been far too tight to organise a conference with such an impressive participation.

Today's conference raises burning issues that demand swift, practical responses.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), more than 900,000 refugees and migrants arrived on Europe's shores this year. 75% of them were fleeing the conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Too many people have lost their lives seeking refuge in Europe for themselves and their families. Some of these tragedies have resonated more than others. We all of us remember, for example, the harrowing images of the lifeless body of the three-year-old Aylan Kurdi. How many nameless others have washed up dead on our shores? More than 3,500 according to estimates, although the real figure is probably much higher.

As it draws to a close, 2015 will be remembered as the year of the refugee crisis. After knocking on Europe's door for years, it has finally found a way in. For a long time, however, we tried to ignore the migration effects of this crisis, predictable though they were.

In 2014, and indeed in previous years, our attitude was one of indifference. The conflict in Syria has been going on for nearly 5 years and now we are having to deal with the consequences of our inaction and our refusal to open our eyes and ears.

We must do everything in our power to ensure that 2016 is a year of hope and solidarity.

Since the summer, we have seen an upsurge in solidarity but it has been uneven and controversial. While the majority agree on the need to be supportive, opinions differ about the kind of measures that are required in practical terms.

Efforts have been made, some countries have taken in large numbers of refugees and the European Union has tried, somehow or other, to provide a co-ordinated response.

Despite these efforts, Europe's response to the refugee tragedy can be summed up in just four words: "too little, too late".

We failed to anticipate the massive arrival of refugees and migrants, and now that we are overwhelmed by its consequences and implications, we are bargaining like carpet-sellers about quotas and figures, with some member states even refusing to take in refugees of non-Christian faiths.

Colleagues, we are talking about human lives.

Providing shelter and support to those who flee conflict and extreme poverty is not only our moral duty, it is also our international obligation.

Above and beyond current events, the refugee crisis also needs to be viewed over the long term. Because let's face it: many of the refugees who have come to Europe will not be going back and we need to come up with sustainable solutions here and now, to facilitate their integration.

As parliamentarians, we must lead the way by taking action at both national and local level.

Allow me to tell you about an eight-point blueprint to address the migration crisis at a pan-European level. I have already presented this plan to the Interparliamentary Assembly and the Nordic Council.

1. Sound the alarm – on two fronts.

We must raise awareness, initiate a comprehensive political debate and make governments aware of the gravity of the problem and the implications.

We must raise the alarm on two issues.

Firstly concerning the massive influx of refugees. With the arrival of winter and various border closures, the flows have subsided somewhat but let's not delude ourselves: the factors that drive refugees from their countries of origin have by no means disappeared. A recent study by the UNHCR shows, indeed, that the refugees and asylum seekers who have entered Europe to date are but an affluent and well-educated fraction of the Syrian population. What will happen when the less affluent sections of the population set off in search of a safe haven? It is important that we not allow ourselves to be caught off-guard twice. Next time, let's be ready to shoulder our moral responsibilities and our obligations under international law.

We must also, however, sound the alarm about the vital need to move beyond the emergency reception stage and set about integrating, without delay, the hundreds of thousands of people who have arrived in Europe. That is no easy task and how we respond to this challenge will shape our societies in the future.

2. Organise ourselves.

A strategic migration management policy is needed in each of our countries and at European level.

3. No procrastinating. Act now.

It will be difficult, but we have to tackle the root causes of refugee situations and irregular migration. Countries of origin need our help to build sustainable societies with accountable institutions and a robust rule of law.

4. Human rights: yours, mine and theirs...

Any person coming to our countries must enjoy the same rights and the same protection as we enjoy. We must be guided by the highest human rights standards, including those enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

5. Integration – Integration – Integration.

Refugees and migrants have to become active members of our societies. We cannot afford to marginalise them and we cannot afford to treat them simply as temporary guests. That way lies certain failure. Integration is a two-way process involving migrants and their host societies.

There are already numerous examples of positive initiatives and experiences and we have everything to gain from publicising these and drawing on them for inspiration. Certain towns and cities can serve as role models. In these times when integrating foreigners is not always popular with voters, we ought to highlight these initiatives and encourage the urban communities concerned by creating a new label: "welcoming cities".

We could also create a "welcoming companies" label. On a recent visit to Austria, I met some people involved in a remarkable scheme designed to ease young refugees into working life by helping them to find apprenticeships and supporting them throughout their training. A number of companies now offer apprenticeships to young refugees on a regular basis. Such initiatives make a difference where integration is concerned and deserve to be recognised.

6. Education – Education – Education.

Education is one of the most important tools to promote integration and cohesion within our societies: we must help these newcomers, especially the young ones.

7. No to discrimination and no to hate.

We must speak out against any type of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia. This is all the more important as populist and extremist ideas are on the rise within our societies.

What is happening in France at the moment is a powerful reminder of this.

8. Think global, act local

Think global, act local. As elected parliamentarians, we have to be active in the field, within our constituencies: talk to our citizens and reassure them, explain policy decisions, support grass-roots initiatives, especially in the field of integration and education.

I strongly believe that combined action in these different areas will help us to find solutions to one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century.

There is one more key point I would add to this list: let's not go to extremes. We all have a responsibility here. Sweeping generalisations are to be avoided.

As you know, the Parliamentary Assembly has already made some moves along these lines.

The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly sounded the alarm, starting with our Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, through numerous reports and following visits to the Turkish-Syrian border, the islands of Lampedusa and Kos and also the Balkans.

I myself travelled to the Turkish-Syrian border with a high-level delegation consisting of 25 members of the Parliamentary Assembly to visit refugee centres, and to see for ourselves how Turkey was coping with the massive influx of refugees fleeing the conflict in the region. By the end of the visit, we were all both impressed and shocked by what we had seen – impressed by what Turkey was doing to provide shelter for two million refugees from Syria and Iraq, and shocked by the fact that the rest of Europe was not giving it more help. The main objective of this visit, which was fully achieved, was to allow European parliamentarians to see the situation on the ground, in order to stimulate debate in the national parliaments and so “sound the alarm”. Today's conference is another way of sounding the alarm, as it were.

In an effort to stand up to hate, we have established the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, an alliance of parliamentarians who have committed themselves to taking open, firm and proactive stands against racism, hatred and intolerance on whatever grounds and however they manifest themselves. Numerous parliamentary speakers and heads of state and government support us in this fight. We are also privileged to count His Holiness Pope Francis among the supporters of this No Hate Alliance.

Ladies and gentlemen, migration is a global issue that demands local action on the part of each and every one of us.

I am confident that by joining forces, we will be able to address it. It is our duty to succeed, together.

Mr Thierry Mariani, Chairperson of the Migration Committee – I wish to thank you, Ms Brasseur, for your awareness-raising and the proposals you have made, as well as for your willingness over these last two years to engage with these issues.

While we wait for Jacques Attali to arrive, I suggest we give the floor to the Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank, the CEB, who will hopefully help to fill any gaps in our knowledge about this organisation.

Mr Wenzel, please tell us something about the organisation of which you are head. You have the floor.

Mr Rolf Wenzel, Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank* – The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has described the challenges facing us extremely well. She mentioned several points which could very easily form the basis of a programme of activities.

The role of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons is more important today than ever, because these issues are crucial not only from a humanitarian standpoint but also for development in Europe and in the regions worst affected by people leaving their homelands.

What we have here is a security issue, a military issue, and a trade and finance issue. We must all work together therefore, with the international political institutions.

I would like to tell you about the work that we do as a development bank.

Three challenges face us today.

The first is to provide immediate support to the countries which are taking in refugees from Syria, for example. Temperatures are now dropping and for those who have to sleep rough, life is becoming more and more difficult. Many die en route, trying to reach Europe in the quest for a safe and peaceful future for themselves and their families.

Youngsters, elderly people, women, children, pregnant women, babies and unaccompanied minors are all trying to make their way to Europe. We must make sure that everyone receives food and medical treatment, and shelter in reception centres. This is what the Council of Europe Development Bank is endeavouring to do. We have set up mechanisms to provide support to the countries receiving all these refugees who have set off in search of a better life for themselves and their children, and we also provide funding for reception centres.

The second challenge concerns the action that needs to be taken in the medium and long term. A political solution needs to be found in order to allow development in these countries and avoid the kind of religious and political conflicts that drive people to leave because they have lost all hope of a better life in their own countries.

The third challenge concerns the necessary co-operation between the international community, the European Investment Bank, the Council of Europe Development Bank and other financial institutions in order to help find solutions. This is crucial. Why would your countries bother joining all these financial institutions if they did not provide help when needed? We must work to improve conditions in the refugees' countries of origin and help the countries of final destination.

I would like to go back to a few points mentioned by Ms Brasseur.

The first is of course education, which is essential for integration. In this respect, the Council of Europe Development Bank can provide funding for education centres or primary schools or training for teachers having to deal for the first time with foreign children who do not speak their language. How can we integrate people into a society if they do not know the language or culture? Education is a crucial factor in integration, and in finding a job and achieving one's ambitions.

The second point concerns human rights. It is very important that all these people fleeing their homelands and arriving in Europe should not be seen as second-class citizens. Care must be taken to ensure that they are treated in a fair and equal manner and helped to become fully-fledged members of the community.

Thirdly, Ms Brasseur, you talked about a comprehensive solution. That is not something which is easy to implement. Each of us must play our part, whether in terms of emergency aid or the funds provided by all the international financial institutions. The money is certainly there, but what is also needed is a co-ordinated approach between the various institutions, so that the financial resources are used in a co-ordinated manner, whether it be to help the UNHCR or other agencies. All the international institutions have the instruments and means to act but we need to co-ordinate our action better and we need you, working alongside us as partners.

It is also important to look beyond this and provide support in the long term. I am thinking here about funding for reception facilities. At some point in the not too distant future, we will have to start rebuilding the economies of the countries that are currently being destroyed by conflict. The question, as you yourself said, Mr Chair, is how to ensure that when all these people return home, they are able to support themselves. Naturally, care will have to be taken to ensure that everyone, including minorities, has a say in this reconstruction process.

There you have the various components of a comprehensive solution.

I agree with you that 2016 should be the year of solidarity. We should not and indeed cannot wait any longer. Those countries which have not been affected by people leaving or by people arriving from other countries likewise have a duty to provide support to the international community.

I will be happy to answer your questions about the Council of Europe Development Bank. We are an institution spanning 41 member states, including EU countries. We are active in all our member countries and are present along the "Balkan route" as it is known. Our members include countries such as Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and the Holy See, and this is something we welcome because it is very important for social cohesion. Our bank was set up in 1956 to help countries deal with the migration flows triggered by the Second World War.

Now Europe is having to contend with another massive influx of refugees. Europe has always attracted economic migrants but what we are seeing today is a phenomenon of a kind never witnessed before, one which requires us all to work together. That, then, is my message to you today: let's work together to find solutions to this challenge.

Mr Thierry Mariani, Chairperson of the Committee – Thank you, Mr Wenzel.

I am now going to hand over the Chair to one of my colleagues, because I have to go to the chamber of the French National Assembly.

(Mr Irakli Chikovani took the Chair from Mr Thierry Mariani.)

Concerns and possible short/medium term solutions

The Chair – I wish to welcome Jacques Attali, who will act as moderator for this part of our conference on concerns and possible short/medium term solutions.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – It is a great honour for me to be with you today, in my capacity as moderator and also as an observer.

The challenge before us is considerable and involves determining how we, as Europeans, can manage to deal, in a dignified and democratic manner, with the problem of migrants, refugees and displaced persons who, as you know better than anyone, are three distinct groups. In the context of an assembly as important as this one, this democratic parliamentary gathering of the countries which together make up a continent that was for so long a rather barbaric place and which is now rightly determined to be in the forefront of civilisation, our panel consists of representatives from Jordan, Greece, Serbia and Sweden.

I will begin by giving the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr Amjad Majali, Member of the Parliament of Jordan, former Minister of Labour* - Ladies and gentlemen, the Arab world is in a state of upheaval, chaos reigns. It is extremely difficult to single out the main issues, because the events unfolding at present are complex and interconnected.

The absence of formal regimes is merely contributing to instability and confusion in the region, creating power vacuums, which regional and international powers then step in to fill. On top of this, there are the regional powers' imperial ambitions and the fact that the major powers have adopted plans for a new Middle East, like the one mapped out by Condoleezza Rice. These moves culminated in what has become known as the "Arab Spring", which led to major instability and total confusion in the region.

These phenomena raise numerous questions: did all this come about by chance, or as a result of the power vacuum? Is there a plan? And if so, is it going to end with a new agreement?

These initiatives and plans have to be seen against the backdrop of a history of post-colonial oppression and chaos and the absence of democracy. Poverty, budget deficits and corruption are rife, together with injustice for the Palestinians owing to Israeli aggression, the aggression of the Israeli colonisers, the occupation of Iraq, the campaigns launched by the main western media and all the attacks directed at our religion, Islam, with these caricatures.

We are now seeing the rise of terrorism and extremism in the form of the so-called Islamic State. The refugee problem, the displacements from South to North and from East to West, are all consequences of this situation, which is driving waves of refugees into neighbouring countries. It began with the Palestinians in 1948 and then again in 1967. It continued with the Lebanese in the 1970s, and then a million Iraqis arrived in 2003, followed by 650,000 Syrians. Before the crisis, a number of Syrians had already settled in Jordan. We estimate the number of refugees present in our country at 1.3 million.

The impact of the tragedy in Syria and the ensuing wave of refugees are placing a very heavy strain on Jordan's economy. It is a burden that is affecting our infrastructure, education system, health care, water supplies, environment, communication and the quality of services. But that is not all. There is also a link between these migration flows and the loss of trading centres and markets and we are drowning in a sea of budget deficits and debt. Jordan and other host countries such as Lebanon cannot take in any more refugees. We have now exceeded our capacity.

I am sorry to say it but we are deeply unhappy about the double standards being applied by the European Union. Turkey has received three billion dollars, while other host countries have been ignored. We believe that Jordan and Lebanon deserve the same treatment.

Europe and the international community should share responsibilities with the host countries. They should not limit their role, but should open their borders. Some of those who are trying to deal with the flows of refugees into Europe are having to contend with racist attitudes in certain parts of Europe.

For us, Islamic State is a terrorist state whose ultimate aim is to destroy the noble image of Islam. Islam is a religion of love and peace, not bloodshed. Unless the international community shares responsibilities with the host countries, unless it participates in the quest for solutions for Syria, Iraq and Palestine and adopts social and economic initiatives to alleviate misery in the region, the waves of refugees will continue in our region and will have adverse consequences for the world as a whole, spreading insecurity and instability that will threaten the global order.

Mr Jacques Attali – Thank you, Mr Majali, for giving us your insight into the situation, coming as you do from a country that has been particularly affected by this problem and which has coped magnificently with the presence of large numbers of migrants, despite the difficulties.

We will now hear from the representative of another country on the frontline of the migrant crisis, Greece, which is currently receiving large numbers of migrants, with all the problems that that entails in terms of Community rules and the need to ensure humane and proper treatment.

I call Mr Pallis.

Mr Georgios Pallis, member of the Committee on Public Administration, Public Order and Justice of the Parliament of Greece* – The aim of this conference is to deal with this extraordinary flow of migrants. In order to be effective, we must supplement our short-term measures with long-term strategies in order to address every aspect of the problem.

We are all of us familiar with the situation in Greece. To date, there have been more than 2,500 incidents at sea and thousands of people have been rescued by the coast guard. It is important to have a clear understanding of what it means when these people set out across the sea. The root of the problem lies in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and in the instability in Afghanistan, and it is important to emphasise that there is no prospect of these refugees returning to their countries of origin.

When it comes to controlling and managing borders, the primary responsibility lies at national level. We have requested assistance from Frontex, which has several operational bases, including in Greece, and is traditionally active in the Aegean.

I myself am originally from Lesbos. Of the 800,000 people who arrived in Greece this year, approximately 470,000 landed on this island, yet Frontex assistance in registering these migrants only began in earnest two months ago. Since October, 20 to 25 people have been helping us in this task. That is all the help we have received from Frontex.

Let us turn our attention now to the subject of hotspots. One of these has been set up on Lesbos and is almost fully operational, processing 300 people a day. We also have registration centres and a reception centre for refugees.

I wish to point out here that we would have been unable to cope with the crisis had it not been for the assistance of local authorities and our government. As it is, we have worked with local authorities, in particular on the islands, to facilitate and speed up the registration process and to enable the migrants to remain for a few days on the island where they arrived so that they can rest. The local authorities have also helped us to find accommodation for the migrants, so that they are treated in a dignified and humane manner.

Greece is on the right track. Four new hotspots on Kos, Lemnos, Samos and Lesbos will be operational shortly. The Samos and Kos hotspots for registering migrants are expected to be fully operational from January.

The main challenge for us is to relocate the migrants. People arriving at the Lesbos reception centre from Syria and Iraq have been relocated in Luxembourg but unfortunately, we are talking about only a handful of

individuals. The way in which asylum applications are handled is improving as the process goes on, however, so we are hopeful that we can overcome the current problems.

In order to allow access to Europe, and positioned as we are, we in Greece believe that humanitarian visas should be issued in order to come to the aid of refugees arriving from third countries. The first 20,000 relocations are to be welcomed, of course, but we need to comply with the procedures of the international organisations, in particular the European organisations. Europe must grant these people permission to enter its territory in order to put an end to the dangerous crossings and the smuggling and avoid endangering people's lives.

The programme that has been put in place is a good starting point for co-operation in dealing with the flows of migrants. As members of the European Union, we also need to come up with a solution to this situation, notably with neighbouring countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon. The European Union must decide what kind of Europe it wants. Do we want a Europe that champions human rights for all, both ourselves and others? Do we want a Europe that comes to the aid of refugees and migrants, that opens its doors to them and offers them hope and somewhere to live?

We on Lesbos represent the face of Europe, and the lives of the island's inhabitants have changed over the past few years. It is difficult to cope, day in day out, with this influx of people. Although the numbers are lower now than they were a few weeks ago, the fact remains that in a town with a population of 25,000 people, 25,000 migrants are walking the streets because we do not have the facilities and the infrastructure to take care of them.

We rely on the support of the local community and we believe we have a duty to help these individuals and ensure that they are looked after. Because those are our values. We also wish to know, however, what the European Union is doing to help us and to create appropriate structures.

Any action that we take needs to be international, but also local. We must come to the aid of these migrants who embark on long journeys through the Balkans to reach Greece.

As regards the Dublin Regulation, the current refugee crisis has highlighted the shortcomings of this Regulation as it stands at present. The countries which lie on the European Union's border have been flagging up these failings for some time. The Dublin Regulation needs to be revised so that we have a system that allows us to distribute asylum seekers, using objective criteria. This is crucial. Greece is in the throes of an economic crisis and the migrant crisis is making matters worse. Until now, we have managed to stay afloat. But it is absolutely essential that Greece begin to feel part of Europe again.

I will stop there in order to allow time to answer questions. I hope I have been able to provide you with some insight into the situation on Greece's borders. What is happening on the island of Lesbos is happening on other islands as well. All this time, the Greek community has endeavoured to help the migrants and to be understanding. We are also trying to stand up for human rights, not only our own but also those of the migrants.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – The figures you mentioned are indeed terrifying. We have all been caught off-guard by this situation.

I would have liked to know where you stand on the Commission's proposal to create a large-scale Community instrument. I note that the European Union is allocating €500 million to Frontex, compared with the 34 billion dollars that the United States spends on its Coast Guard, the US equivalent of what Frontex should be. The reason for this huge gap in funding for managing our external borders is that in Europe, the resources are not federalised. Although not of direct relevance to this Assembly, the issue is nevertheless worth mentioning here.

I would ask each of the participants to limit themselves to seven or eight minutes, in order to allow time for discussion.

I call Mr Omerović, who is going to tell us how the situation is perceived in Serbia, a country which although not one of the frontline states, is just next door.

Mr Meho Omerović, Chairperson, Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia– Ladies and Gentlemen, in the past two decades the Republic of Serbia has been faced with stormy and turbulent migratory trends. It implies the arrival of refugees from

the former Yugoslav Republics and internally displaced persons from the AP Kosovo and Metohija, and lately we have seen the influx of asylum seekers from Asian and African countries and illegal migrants, but also the reintegration of returnees under the Readmission Agreement.

As a region surrounded by the Member States of the European Union, the Western Balkans is a transit area for irregular migratory flows. The Western Balkan routes are for the most part in the function of the transit flow of migrants entering the EU territory via the Greek-Turkish border and continuing further towards EU countries. The Republic of Serbia happens to be on the route of migrants entering primarily from the territory of Macedonia, but also the territory of Bulgaria, transiting through the territory of Serbia to enter the EU territory via the Serbian-Hungarian and Serbian-Croatian border.

Although essentially a transit country, Serbia fulfills all standards regarding protection of migrants. Ever since the beginning of the migration crisis, the Government of the Republic of Serbia have chosen a proactive approach in order to provide adequate protection and assistance to those in need, and showed readiness, within its possibilities, to face the situation of the large influx of migrants. Enormous efforts have been made in order to grant the migrants, during their stay in Serbia, adequate assistance, enable suitable reception, temporary accommodation, medical care, aid in food and medicines, as well as all information about the asylum procedure, with full respect for their human rights. At the same time efforts are made to enhance border control and prevention of criminal activities of smugglers and traffickers.

Recognising the need for urgent and coordinated action, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, on 18 June 2015, established a working group to address the problem of mixed migratory flows consisting of five ministers of the relevant ministries and the Commissioner of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration.

In order to respond to the increasing influx of migrants and ensure conditions for their registering and additional capacities for their accommodation in their direction of movement and in the case of prolonged stay, additional 13 centres have been opened.

According to the data of the Ministry of Interior, since the beginning of 2015, more than 600,000 migrants from up to 107 countries have passed through Serbia. The largest number is from Syria and Afghanistan. This year, compared with the previous year, 20 times more irregular migrants have been detected. Two-thirds of all migrants who passed through Serbia during this year were male, while there were about 150,000 minors.

Serbia is making every effort to register all migrants, take their biometric data and allow them effective access to the asylum system, but almost all of them do not want to seek asylum in Serbia. This is corroborated by the fact that only 15 of them were waiting for the legal procedure and got asylum in our country. The fact is that in recent weeks there has been a decrease in the number, and a little more than 4,000 refugees arrive in Serbia every day.

In carrying out these tasks we face certain issues that arise from the key question of whether Europe makes a distinction between migrants who have the right to seek asylum in the EU and those who do not.

I would like to bring up some of these issues. What do we do with persons who do not have the right to seek asylum in the EU? Do we stop them, because if they do not have the right to seek asylum then the efficient asylum system cannot be applied on them? How do we return them and where do we return them, since some of them claim that they are threatened, and how do we establish that kind of control?

Serbia makes every effort to have all migrants photographed and their fingerprints and full biometric data taken. However, the question is what about data bases with which we can compare the data taken, and in a very short period of several minutes. It is therefore necessary that migrants are already registered in Greece. The exchange of data, in terms of prevention, is very important, especially when regarding people who may later be a terrorist threat to Europe.

I therefore welcome the initiative of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to organise a conference on "A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe". There is no doubt that there is a need to adopt a common policy or action platforms related to the current migration. The first step is certainly developing humanitarian approach, which includes measures and actions, which would be focused on this problem in order to prevent migratory flows, but also to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants.

In addition to these open issues, I would like to point out, in the end, that this development puts pressure on the state institutions that deal with migration management both in organisational and financial respect, because migration management is a complex process that requires planned and organised actions, as well as a coordinated approach and continuous cooperation between all relevant bodies.

Therefore it is necessary to provide assistance to the public and the donor community, regarding the needs of migrants and the countries that are on the route of the Western Balkans with no access to existing funds allocated for addressing such issues.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Thank you for those very clear-cut comments and proposals.

I give the floor to Ms Finstorp.

Ms Lotta Finstorp, Member of the Social Insurance Committee of the Parliament of Sweden* – I would like firstly to thank you for inviting me.

Between 1850 and 1910, almost every fifth Swede emigrated to America. But that was long ago. Sweden has recently gone from being an emigration country to one of Europe's biggest immigration countries. 1992 used to be the year with most asylum seekers coming to Sweden, primarily due to war in the Balkans. There were 84 000 asylum seekers. Now there are record numbers of asylum seekers coming to Sweden: approximately 160 000 asylum seekers this year – so far. Most are from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Of these, about 34 000 are unaccompanied children and youths. Even last year, Sweden took a great number of asylum seekers - over 80 000 people came to Sweden. Since 2001 there have been 350 000 asylum seekers. We are, at the same time, a small country, population-wise. Many who have come to Sweden have entered society and working life. But a greater challenge in recent times has been to get people into work. We have a high education level in Sweden, high entry-level wages and not so many simple jobs. Unemployment among those born outside of Europe is high. There are also other challenges that often follow in the footsteps of unemployment and social marginalisation. This could be, for example, problems in city suburbs with juvenile criminality. We have a party in the Riksdag with a xenophobic basis that has recently grown ever stronger.

Why has Sweden become such a big immigration country in recent times?

Sweden differs from the other Nordic and EU countries with our generous acceptance of refugees. This autumn we have taken in 100 000 asylum seekers. This makes us the country in the EU that takes most asylum seekers per capita. There are several explanations for this.

We have a regulatory framework that gives better possibilities of being granted asylum compared with other countries. We have a high level of social welfare for those who come here, which has also given us a good reputation in other countries. Our political representatives from most parties, both conservative and socialist, have emphasised the importance of openness and having a good reception of refugees. Because we have already accepted many refugees, many have known of Sweden as an immigrant country, have acquaintances here, and also wished to come here.

The primary explanation in recent times is, however, something else: namely that the EU's common asylum system has fallen. The Schengen border is not being upheld. Neither are the borders between the countries in the EU, and this has significant consequences for Sweden as a result. It has been as though Sweden has had a border directly with Turkey.

It has recently become clear that the situation in Sweden has become unsustainable. We can no longer cope with such a large influx of refugees. The authorities can no longer guarantee housing for the asylum seekers who are now arriving. There is a serious shortage of schools, teachers and other staff. The social services in the municipalities are under great strain. Health care and social care is also being affected. Other activities must take a step back and statutory tasks are set aside. The costs of migration are expected to rise dramatically.

Our wish that the other EU countries should do more and take a greater responsibility for accepting refugees has not received the attention we had hoped. In this situation, Sweden also needs to take steps. It has been clear to both the government, which is led by the Social Democrat Party, and most of the opposition parties.

We in the Moderate Party have renewed our migration policy. This has meant a significantly stricter position compared to the policy we had when in government from 2006 to 2014.

In October this year most of the Riksdag parties were in agreement about a package of measures. This was about, among other things, introducing temporary residence permits and sharpening the demand to be self-supporting. After this, the government presented further tightened measures. The aim is to be at a minimum level within the EU. In parallel, temporary border controls have been introduced at Sweden's borders. In the near future, the thought is that ID checks will be introduced on buses, trains and ferries inbound to Sweden. The aim is to create better control over asylum reception and reduce the application pressure to Sweden.

The Moderate Party's opinion is that the government is taking steps in the right direction. We are, however, worried because they are not sufficient in the present situation. The new tightened migration policy we now see in Sweden is a clear and quick turnaround from previously.

Why is this so?

Sweden has a long tradition of openness, of which we are proud. This has contributed to us wishing to hold fast to our open policy and not wanting to see the challenges that come with a great number of refugees arriving. Under the moderate-led earlier government, a multi-party cooperation in migration policy occurred. The aim was to avoid the Riksdag party with xenophobic basis having influence over policy. This cooperation can have contributed to locking policy, and relevant reforms not becoming reality. Here we in the Moderate Party have reason to be self-critical. The great increase in asylum seekers, however, came later.

In reality, the EU borders have fallen. The great number of asylum seekers. This has made it necessary for Sweden to look more realistically at the question: What can our country cope with? How can we best help? What is necessary to counteract important societal functions being threatened and seeing that the tension between different groups in society does not increase?

The way forward: The great number of asylum seekers is a very great challenge for Sweden and will affect us for a long time. There must be a number of reforms in Sweden so that the many people who have come here will be given the opportunity for a good life and also to contribute to society. Reforms for jobs and education are central. We should give prerequisites, but also demand of people that one contributes to society. What will happen in the short term is an open question. I want Sweden to be able to continue to be an open country that can accept people who seek protection. But we must be realistic with what we can cope with. And more realistic than we have been earlier.

My wish is also that it will be possible to come to solutions on the EU level. Otherwise there is a risk that the entire EU system with the free movement collapses. We need to quickly put in place a permanent working redistribution mechanism between countries. It must have respect for signed conventions such as the UN's Refugee Convention and the European Council Convention on Human Rights. Here we can all contribute to discussions in our own countries and at EU level.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Thank you, Ms Finstorp, for bringing us this perspective, from a country that has experienced both emigration and, more latterly, immigration.

I give the floor to Mr Westerveen.

Mr Gert Westerveen, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the European institutions in Strasbourg* – The UNHCR is convinced that tackling the refugee issue requires international co-operation. This is essential for addressing the problem. We therefore welcome this meeting today with the Council of Europe.

This is not the first time Europe has had to deal with large numbers of refugees. Twenty years ago, 1.2 million refugees arrived in Europe, fleeing the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In 1999, during the Kosovo crisis, we also saw a sharp increase in the number of refugees. Since then, the Council of Europe and the European Union have expanded to include new members. If all these countries worked together, it would once again be possible to overcome the current crisis. Achieving that requires the co-operation of all the countries involved, however, which is why the UNHCR regrets the fact that not all member countries of the European Union are eager to support the proposed measures.

In the short term, the UNHCR believes that action is necessary on the following fronts: continued search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean; increase in first-line reception facilities in the countries of first arrival and improved registration, and improvements in the functioning of the relocation and distribution scheme

within the EU. The scheme as it stands at present is designed for 22,000 people and it is clear that the capacity will have to be increased.

The UNHCR fully supports the European Union's proposals regarding hotspots and the relocation scheme. More could be done, however, including increasing the number of countries involved. Improving the schemes for humanitarian admission from countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan would also help to relieve the pressure there.

The UNHCR believes there is a need to increase all the possibilities for legal entry into Europe, whether through humanitarian visas, student visas, family reunion visas or other. Every possible means should be used to relieve the pressure on people who are having to seek dangerous routes across the Mediterranean, using smugglers.

To conclude, I would like to call for support for the UNHCR's activities. The UNHCR is doing a great deal at present but as has already been pointed out, the winter can be very harsh and difficult for migrants. The activities for displaced persons in Syria and the refugee programmes in Lebanon and Jordan remain underfunded.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I call Ms Groth

Ms Annette Groth, Member of the Parliament of Germany* – I have been on the Balkan route. I have been at the station in Budapest. And I have been several times to Greece. The last time, I travelled to Kos with a delegation from the Council of Europe. What I saw there was the complete failure of the UN organisations and others.

In November I went to Serbia. I had been before, so was able to observe the progress that had been made. To be sure, staff from the UNHCR and Unicef had been deployed but once again, there was absolutely no co-ordination. Mr Westerveen and the previous speakers also mentioned this lack of co-ordination. I cannot understand it, as this is not the first time we have had to cope with a major refugee crisis.

I find it shocking, for example, that there is no focal point for unaccompanied minors. I have raised the question on more than one occasion. Thousands of minors arrive unaccompanied and, in most countries, there are no proper facilities that would allow them to be treated as minors. Clearly, however, they need to be segregated from other migrants and given special attention. That is my first point.

Ms Brasseur mentioned hate speech which is becoming increasingly virulent. In my own country, Germany, there have been over 600 attacks directed against reception centres for asylum seekers. Some of these centres have been set alight. Fortunately, no one died but there have been some injuries. These were clearly cases of attempted murder, given that it was common knowledge that the buildings were occupied, and yet not a single person has been convicted.

I would also like to return to the subject of Hungary. I am disappointed that there is no one here representing Hungary. I read an article about the situation there and I have heard many first-hand accounts of refugees being ill-treated by police officers, soldiers, government officials, etc. The migrants and refugees, it is claimed, have links with terrorism. This is an extremely dangerous attitude and one that leads to xenophobia. We know all too well what comes of labelling all migrants and refugees as potential terrorists. Such attitudes should not be tolerated therefore.

My last point concerns what Mr Majali said about double standards. Funding is not the only area where double standards apply. European politicians are reluctant to criticise Israel, yet the policy that is being pursued by Israel at present is genuinely dangerous. Hate speech in Israel is an everyday occurrence. In some towns and cities, people talk openly about how Arabs must be killed. Since 1 October, more than a hundred Palestinians have been murdered. Some of them were very young. I have a list here. I have also seen horrific videos and I think it is high time the Council of Europe spoke out against actions of this kind. For Israel has ties with the Council of Europe and with the European Union. It receives millions of euros from the European Union. Jordan and Lebanon have taken in so many Palestinian refugees over the decades and yet we often forget this. Now, they are having to cope with all these refugees from Syria. In my view, we need to act swiftly as otherwise the situation, which is already extremely bad, will get even worse.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I think we need to focus on the subjects that are on the agenda and it is clear from your comments, Ms Groth, that we have plenty to discuss already, not least as regards inter-agency co-ordination and combating police brutality.

I give the floor to Mr Tsiaras.

Mr Konstantinos Tsiaras, Member of the Parliament of Greece, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs* - As you know, my native Greece, as the gateway to Europe, has the onerous duty of dealing with a very difficult situation. We are truly in the frontline, as many of you have already mentioned. We are trying to handle the situation with sensitivity, being guided by European values.

The panel has already identified some priorities but I would like to return to what the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe said in her excellent speech.

I would like to focus on the subject of borders. Border control and management is primarily a national responsibility. In this critical time, it is extremely important to make full use of Frontex's mandate and to enhance its capabilities which depend on contributions from member states. We look forward to closer maritime co-operation based on the request submitted by Greece. We have to find the right balance between controlling the borders and respecting the principle of non-foulement and EU asylum. In this effort, the specific features of sea borders should be taken into account.

We have also submitted a request to Frontex for assistance on the border with "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in the registration of refugees and migrants who have not yet been registered.

We have also activated the European civil protection mechanism, requesting specific guidance to help deal with humanitarian aspects.

At the same time, we have asked that the Rapid Border Intervention Team be activated in the eastern Aegean Sea, especially on the islands of Lesbos, Samos, Kos, Kalymnos and Rhodes, among others. The refugee crisis, as everyone in this room knows, has revealed the limits and shortcomings of the Dublin Regulation. Frontline EU countries have been stressing this all along: the Dublin Regulation needs to be completely overhauled in order to pave the way for a genuine border service that would allocate asylum seekers on the basis of objective criteria.

We have reached a very critical moment when much could change in the European Union and I agree with Ms Brasseur that we need to act before we become overwhelmed by the facts and developments in the situation.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Thank you for this very clear and urgent message.

I call Ms El Ouafi.

Ms Nezha El Ouafi, member of the Chamber of Representatives of Morocco – It is time to talk about a positive, comprehensive strategy for immigration. Immigration has followed a long and complex path since the 1980s and a distinction needs to be made between the immigration of the past and what is happening now. We need to wake up and ask ourselves the right questions in order to find the right answers.

The time has come to evaluate the strategies that we have employed until now, because Morocco, as the gateway to the Mediterranean, has worked hard with the European Union on co-operation and conventions. The European Union has launched numerous programmes and introduced policies but has still not found the courage to ask the right questions. A comprehensive strategy is one that includes the countries of origin and involves migrants themselves in the development of programmes and policies, alongside citizens from migrant backgrounds.

My proposal is quite clear. I mentioned it yesterday at the meeting of the migration committee, and I wish to echo what Anne Brasseur said, in the context of the fight against hate speech: as parliamentarians and within our own parties, we need to incorporate in our strategies, programmes and policies some basic rules on tolerance as part of a political pact on the issue of immigration, Islam and its cultural and religious wealth. Only that way will we be able to alleviate the problems and tensions.

Allow me to tell you a little anecdote: just after the Paris attacks, a Moroccan woman living in Italy was getting her children ready for school. The children refused to go, however, because the previous day, on the bus to school, fingers had been pointed at them and they had been accused of being IS. When the mother

asked the children's friends to explain their behaviour, she realised that the confusion had arisen because of television footage of Arab immigrants wearing headscarves and going to the mosque and who were supposedly IS.

Obviously, we must not stifle the media but at the same time, there is a need to adopt an ethical approach to immigration, diversity and Islam.

I would like to return to what Mr Majali said. Could we not also think about setting up an observatory in European countries to investigate the enforcement of human rights in relation to these complex issues which often have their roots in parts of the Arab world that have nothing to do with the European context, particularly where second- and third-generation immigrants are concerned.

As for the influx of refugees that we are seeing at present, I simply wonder whether the European Union has done everything in its power politically speaking to settle the conflicts. That, indeed, is the question we should all be asking ourselves. For nobody can claim that Europe has done nothing. On the contrary, it has done a great deal to develop reception facilities and ensure that migrants receive support and are treated humanely. There is a pressing need, however, for a political response to the crises unfolding in the Mediterranean, in the Arab world, in Syria and Lebanon, and which are driving the migration.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – The refugee problem does indeed depend to a very large extent on solving the political problems that lie behind it.

I call Mr Di Stefano.

Mr Manlio Di Stefano, Member of the Parliament of Italy* – I will begin with a thought that stems directly from the previous comments, whether made by members of the panel or those who spoke in the debate.

Frankly, I can no longer sit by and allow this institution to talk like all the others in response to the international media, as though populism were public enemy number one, more important even than migration or terrorism. This terrorism that you hate so much stems from the errors made by the very institutions which you, ladies and gentlemen, represent.

The fact is that when citizens choose populism, they do so because populism refers to the people. When citizens see the political class failing, for decades, to find solutions, they cling to their last hope and in many countries today, that last hope is seen as lying in far-right and far-left movements. Wrongly, of course, but these movements do nevertheless appeal to people's instincts.

We need to take a hard look, therefore, at what we have been doing to bring about such anxiety and anger on the part of our fellow citizens.

If we look at the experience of the Italians, it will be noted that my own party, the Five Star Movement, is a response to all of this. That is why we have very little populism in Italy. Had it not been for the Five Star Movement, we would no doubt have seen an upsurge in parties such as the Northern League, whose ideology feeds on racism and xenophobia. So let us be very careful when we talk about citizens not understanding. Citizens do not have to understand: they feel our failings in their bones. That is why far-right or openly xenophobic parties thrive.

We keep talking about this but at the same time, we are not doing anything tangible. To be sure, an institution like the Council of Europe does not have legislative authority in the way that the European Commission does, but if we continue to repeat the mistakes of the European Commission, we will never break this cycle. It is important therefore that we get to grips with the situation and understand clearly that terrorist attacks, war and the exploitation of resources all follow the same pattern: the historical inability of certain regions of the world to have a dialogue with other regions. Whatever we do, we still have these two blocs, and we are not doing anything to foster integration between them.

Allow me to give you a few examples.

I have heard it said that the United States spends 34 billion dollars on the coast guard. They do not have the budgetary pact that we in the European Union have, however. The situation on the border with Mexico is hardly exemplary: people are allowed to cross into the US whenever they are a source of cheap labour. Which is what tends to happen in general and what generates populism.

We in Italy have seen periods when migrants came in relatively small numbers, providing us, very conveniently, with an inexpensive work force. There have been a great many deaths over the years among those who come to southern Italy to harvest the olives and grapes yet no one took any notice. There is a great deal of hypocrisy, therefore.

We do not have much time to resolve this problem. Obviously, we need to think about the kind of action that is required in the long term but as regards the short term, much has been said about hotspots. Again, this seems to be some misunderstanding here.

The largest reception centre in Italy is in Mineo, Sicily. There are 4,000 migrants in Mineo, a town with a population of just 5,000. Do you really think that the people of Mineo can cope with a situation like that? The ratio of migrants to non-migrants is almost 1:1, whereas as a general rule, it should not exceed 1:1000 if the local population is not to feel "swamped".

New hotspots have been opened, again in Sicily, in Porto Empedocle and Pozzallo, but they are not the answer. Do you really want Sicily to end up in the hands of the Northern League? Because that is exactly what will happen if we persist with the present course. Either we shoulder our responsibilities or we put citizens in a situation where they can see that migrants are manageable because the problem is being handled by the state. Migration cannot be left to local communities to deal with, otherwise the problem will never be resolved.

The focus at present is on building Fortress Europe: controls at sea, walls, barbed wire. No one is talking about the causes of the problem, however.

We must put an end to arms sales, to the exploitation of resources and land.

China, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom account for 74% of the world's arms sales. Over the past five years, Italy's revenue from arms sales has increased from €5 to 9 billion. Saudi Arabia is our biggest client and Israel has placed an arms order worth €470 billion with Italy. We also export arms from Italy to Yemen where we are seeing untold slaughter of civilians.

On the subject of the exploitation of territory, I could mention ENI, British Petroleum, Shell, Total. All of these big corporations belong to countries represented around this table. ENI continues to operate in Nigeria where the group is being investigated for corruption. We continue going to these countries in order to exploit their resources. We exploit the workers on the ground and leave a trail of destruction behind us, including environmental disasters. In the process, we are creating some of the biggest problems the world has ever seen, in the shape of economic migrants and climate migrants.

The flow of economic migrants is not going to end any time soon if we do not tackle the root of the problem. In the short term, therefore, I do not want to hear about hotspots and defence of territory because if we were really willing to tackle the roots of the problem, we would find solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen. When you go back to your respective parliaments, do what I did with the Five Star Movement: table motions for laws to put an end to arms sales and the exploitation of resources and territory, through bilateral agreements with countries. Make sure that policymakers are no longer mixed up in the management of these big corporations. We need to ensure that citizens are active stakeholders in the choices countries make. Constitutions must be reformed to allow integration, so as to give people a voice in institutions, rather than alienating them. That is what we have to do if we want to go on talking about management. For the migrants are here, in Europe, and if we are not careful, we will still be talking about immigration a hundred years from now.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Thank you, Mr Di Stefano, for broadening this debate. I should point out that while in some parts of Italy, the ratio of migrants to population is 1:1, there are Greek islands where it stands at 10:1.

I call Ms Al-Astal.

Ms Najat Al-Astal, Member of the Parliament and Council of Palestine* – I come from the Gaza district.

Palestine has suffered a great deal and is still suffering today as Palestinian refugees seek to flee the war and enter neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon or Syria. Some want to leave the Palestinian territories. Nearly six million Palestinians are refugees.

We are trying to provide these refugees with reception facilities, social services, health care and education but after the crisis in Syria, we experienced serious financial problems and are unable, with the funds available to us at present, to cater for all these Palestinian refugees. Last year, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), announced that it was suspending assistance for Palestinian refugees, especially those fleeing Syria or Lebanon.

That is why many Palestinians, together with their children, are trying to make their way across the Mediterranean to Europe. These Palestinian refugees are not treated in the same way as other refugees, however. In many European countries, they are stopped.

Many have lost their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean. After the last war in Gaza in 2014, many Gazans fled via underground tunnels, with the help of smugglers. Their aim was to reach the Mediterranean. Almost 1,000 people have been lost at sea and almost 500,000 Gaza residents have been displaced because of the war. Many of them have been unable to find somewhere to stay, other than the UNRWA school. Providing support for these Palestinians and dealing with them is putting a heavy strain on UNRWA.

UNRWA needs more support and funding, therefore, so that its members can carry on providing basic services to the Palestinian refugees and stop them trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe or elsewhere.

We also need to put an end to the Israeli occupation. Agreements have been concluded, notably the 1967 agreement establishing Jerusalem as the capital. We must abide by these agreements and secure the right for Palestinians to return to their homeland. This is a very important point for the Palestinian people.

Also, in view of the global nature of this migrant crisis, it would make sense to provide support to transit countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. More funding should be made available to them. This is essential if we are to reduce migration to Europe.

Looking ahead to the long term, there is a need to tackle the very roots of the crisis in the Middle East, and to understand why people become refugees and leave their country of origin. It is vital to resolve this issue peacefully, through political and diplomatic channels, and to avoid further spreading the war in the Middle East.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I think it would be good, in the hour that remains to us, to try to focus the debate on possible answers that could be put forward by the Assembly. We are familiar with the issues, and it might be worth looking now at what might emerge over the coming weeks or months by way of a practical response and urgent reforms.

I call Ms Gafarova.

Ms Sahiba Gafarova, Member of the Parliament of Azerbaijan* – I would like to begin by thanking the organisers of this conference. I strongly believe that the issues being discussed here are very important and I think this conference is a great opportunity for us to talk to one another and share our thoughts and ideas.

Anne Brasseur, President of the PACE, has pointed out that one of the ways to integrate migrants in society is through education. I totally agree: without education, there can be no real integration of migrants. As general rapporteur on violence against women, I would like to draw your attention to one of the main problems encountered by refugee and migrant women and girls.

Refugee and migrant women and girls have limited access to education. This is generally one of the reasons for the high level of unemployment in this group. In order to ensure that their basic rights are observed, it is of the utmost important to create genuine equal opportunities and proper access to education. Most refugee and migrant women and girls suffer from a lack of education in their own countries and this has a huge impact on their integration process.

Nowadays one of the basic requirements for access to employment is an appropriate education. I strongly believe that these problems should be considered not solely in terms of economic challenges but also as a human rights issue with a considerable impact on migrants, refugees and the host population. The PACE should study the best practice in member states concerning access to education and employment for migrant and refugee women.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I give the floor to Ms Silva.

Ms Maria Luisa Silva, director of the UNDP Office in Geneva* – As we at the UNDP are a development organisation, I will be providing a “development” perspective.

My first point is that in order to address the crisis, we must tackle the root causes of human displacement. That means establishing peace, ending violence and creating wider economic opportunities.

Allow me to share one concern with you: in many European countries, development aid budgets have been significantly reduced, for various reasons including to address domestic needs in terms of facilities for migrants and refugees. While we understand and support the need for adequate attention to be given to newcomers, we fear that using official development aid, which is meant to help the most vulnerable people in the most fragile countries, may eventually backfire, exacerbating the risks in other parts of the world.

My second point is that the impact of sudden, large influxes of displaced populations in many ways jeopardises hard-won development gains. This was very clearly explained by the Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament. Generosity should be recognised and efforts supported but we also believe that the humanitarian response should be supplemented by a political one. It is not a question of one or the other: the two approaches go hand in hand.

At the UNDP, we are working with countries of origin, transit and destination to support communities which take in refugees and migrants. We are trying to build resilience within communities. For example, we have been working with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and all the relevant countries under the regional resilience programme.

On 4 February, we will be holding a pledging conference. Most of the pledges given for these very important programmes go largely unfunded, however. Last year, for example, only 50% of the activities were funded. In our regional response planning in the Balkans, we will be presenting a programme at a pledging conference in January. We hope we can count on the support of members of parliament from all countries in meeting the demands presented in these programmes.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – One of the basic functions of any parliament is to approve the budget. It is up to everyone around this table, therefore, to ensure that the resources needed for the kind of programmes referred to are made available.

I call Mr Jean-Marie Heydt.

Mr Jean-Marie Heydt, President of the Council of Europe’s North-South Centre – To avoid repeating what has already been said, I will simply say a few words on the issue that you have raised.

We have made it quite clear that a distinction needs to be made between economic migrants and asylum seekers. This also has a direct impact on the kind of response that is required, however. What are we to do, for example, about those migrants who do not fit the reception criteria set by the European Union? As Ms Brasseur pointed out, we need to work at the level of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Although the key element, funding, comes mainly from the European Union, that is no reason to confine ourselves to that framework. All 47 member states of the Council of Europe and even the observers and various other participants should be involved.

Located as it is in Lisbon, between the North and the South, the North-South Centre is well placed to provide co-ordination and to generate activities with its partners in the South and the North. This co-ordination should not be only between states. It should also be pursued through what is known as the quadrilogue, meaning governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society. This co-ordination is also very important if we are to move forward and avoid a situation where only voice and one point of view is being expressed and so that we are not restricted by any verbal or imaginary boundaries that we may create.

Much has already been said about how to deal with migration and our proposals concerning the reception of migrants. It is important to be aware that the majority of migrants are there for the duration, they are not merely passing through. Even though some countries hope they will move on and settle in a neighbouring country, the fact remains that we have a joint responsibility to take them in wherever they end up, whether it be for years or even a lifetime.

For the North-South Centre, the main goal is to work on the educational aspect. This requires time and is totally in line with the approach outlined by Ms Groth, regarding unaccompanied minors.

We are also working on women's participation in democratic development in the countries of origin. I mention this point because when I was at the Lagos meeting earlier this year, with the PACE sub-committee, attention was drawn to the importance of the diasporas, in terms of what they can do to build bridges between North and South.

These are all important considerations if we are to be able to act in a concerted manner.

As I see it, the key word here is "co-ordination". We must pursue common policies, not single policies, but common, co-ordinated ones. Rather than depending solely on national governments, even though the latter do have specific tasks and responsibilities here, these policies should also involve the various stakeholders, because everyone is unique and as such has something to contribute.

Those are the points I wished to make, in addition to what has already been said. Where I work, the focus is, of course, on the North-South context but we are well aware that, as was pointed out earlier this morning, the migration debate concerns East and West in the broader sense, beyond Europe's borders.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I call your neighbour, Mr Obradović.

Mr Žarko Obradović, Member of the Parliament of Serbia* – Like my colleague who spoke earlier, I come from Serbia and I would like to add a few words about the situation in our country.

It has been pointed out that refugee crises are not a new phenomenon and that they occurred throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Back then, however, the refugees in Europe hoped to return home after the war ended, while others emigrated further afield, to Australia or the United States.

The situation today is very different and if we want to resolve this problem, we must adopt a global strategy, because the issues involved are extremely complex. We cannot prevent war in Syria or conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We cannot stop migrants from leaving these countries because they do not want to remain there.

As my colleague has already said, Serbia has received over 600,000 refugees. These people do not want to stay in Serbia. Only a hundred or so have applied for asylum there and even then, they only did so in order to have 72 hours within which to decide whether to stay in Serbia, or whether to go to Hungary or elsewhere in Europe.

Serbia does not have the capacity to accommodate so many migrants and refugees. If we are to resolve the current situation, therefore, we need to have a single migration policy and a harmonised approach between countries of origin, transit and destination.

I would like to conclude by emphasising that the responsibility for solving this problem does not lie with Europe and the Council of Europe alone. It is also a matter for the United States and other countries, because the costs are high and countries like Serbia need financial support in order to be able to tackle it. The economic and financial crisis left the Serbian economy in ruins. We have lost a great deal of money in recent years and we need more co-operation and understanding from other countries. We also need more tolerance. Resolving this problem requires a concerted effort.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Like other countries, Serbia is neither willing nor able to take in so many migrants. The fact is, however, that over the coming years, we Europeans are going to have to grapple with the issue of how to cope not with a few thousand but with millions of migrants. The population of Europe is 500 million, one per cent is 5 million. Some European countries have seen their population grow significantly. Over the next ten years, we will find ourselves having to deal not with tens or hundreds of thousands but with millions of people.

The question therefore is what are we going to do about this. Do we simply develop a border policy, given that no such policy exists at present? Hence the issue of a US Coast Guard-style Frontex. Secondly, what kind of integration policy is needed in order to create the necessary conditions to enable us to take people in and create more Europeans thanks to this influx which, I believe, should be viewed not as a threat but rather as good news for a continent whose demographic growth was and remains uncertain.

As an outside observer, I was surprised to hear so little talk of integration and secularism, and of what can be done to present the migrants' arrival as a good news story. For if they are not good news, they are enemies and that changes everything. As an outside observer, I was surprised to hear no mention of this.

I give the floor to Mr Šabović.

Mr Husnija Šabović, Member of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of Montenegro* - I am very pleased to be attending this conference on migration. I am a member of the Human Rights Committee.

In recent months we have seen a massive influx of migrants. Thousands of people from Syria and Afghanistan have fled for their lives across the sea. It is absolutely essential that we apply all the relevant conventions and give these people access to all the services they need. This massive influx of migrants into South-East Europe is putting considerable pressure on countries in the region, and the closure of certain borders has caused much concern among the refugees and is liable to aggravate the crisis.

I wish to focus in particular on the risks of people trafficking. This is one of the most serious issues, and one that all European governments need to address through a common approach. One way to protect against this threat is to improve reception conditions in the countries of first arrival.

Europe is currently facing one of the most serious humanitarian crises it has ever seen since the end of the Second World War. The Schengen system, one of the greatest achievements of European integration, is in danger of collapsing. It is imperative that European states and their partners think about the future of the European Union and take the decisions needed to restore stability.

The route that runs through Montenegro is fraught with peril. And yet we are seeing huge numbers of migrants arriving in the former Yugoslavia. Montenegro has decided to act and to take the necessary measures to accommodate the migrants. The Montenegrin government has accordingly adopted an action plan to take in migrants. In introducing this plan, it is doing its best to respect the rights of the refugees and the migrants and to comply with all the conventions to which Montenegro is party.

There needs to be close inter-state co-operation, not only with neighbouring countries but with any countries that require international assistance.

Our action plan covers all aspects related to the migrants' arrival.

Medical centres have been set up and extensive arrangements put in place to receive the migrants. Everything is being done to ensure their safety and meet their various needs. Legal aid is even available.

A special team is responsible for implementing this action plan and we are also working with the International Organization for Migration.

We have set up centres that respect human rights, therefore. Everyone who works in these centres has to abide by the principles of human rights and treat the migrants with the utmost impartiality and humanity.

Particular attention is paid to the most vulnerable individuals, in keeping with the recommendations of the Justice Ministry. We also follow all the recommendations made by the Sarajevo Conference.

We need to be more supportive and take in as many refugees as possible, while respecting human rights. Montenegro is a signatory of the Convention and the Protocol on the status of refugees. It has adapted its own legislation to bring it into line with the Convention and observes the rules in force in the European Union. It follows very strict procedures regarding the reception of migrants and also when it comes to granting refugee status to migrants arriving in the country.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I give the floor to Ms Gasal Vrazalica.

Ms Maja Gasal Vrazalica, Member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina* – It was very important to us to be here today, firstly because we do not yet have EU candidate status, and secondly because we are making extensive efforts to ensure the human rights of migrants and refugees are respected and regulated in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would like to say something about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has a very complex set-up. Our country is made up of two entities and responsibilities are exercised at entity level rather than at national level.

Attending conferences of this kind is very important for us because it affords us an opportunity to converse with you and gives us fresh impetus and encouragement. We are eager to join the Council of Europe and the European Union and we would like to work out a common strategy with you.

Today in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hate speech and Islamophobia are rife. It seems that more citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have gone to Syria than Syrians have come to Bosnia and Herzegovina and there are many in our country who believe that everyone arriving from Syria is a terrorist. This tendency to equate migrants with terrorists can be traced back to the terrorist attacks that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina three months ago: one in the Serb Republic of Bosnia and the other in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both of these terrorist acts were committed by people who, 18 months earlier, had been fighting in Syria.

Insofar as there is no harmonised campaign across the two entities, it is very difficult for us to raise public awareness and get people to understand that the migrants and refugees arriving from Syria are not terrorists. It is important, as we see it, to introduce a comprehensive public awareness strategy because we do genuinely want to help the migrants and refugees. Country-wide efforts are probably also needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina to combat hate speech and Islamophobia.

Without the support of the Council of Europe and the European Union, we will never make any progress. We cannot act alone.

Some of our citizens are EU passport holders, as they have a second Croatian passport that allows them to travel to Europe. People who do not have one, however, cannot travel to countries like France to attend conferences such as this one.

Greece has complained of a lack of co-ordination. But imagine the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina which is not even a member of the European Union or the Council of Europe! Any co-ordination, however limited, would be most welcome. Many EU countries today are in the process of erecting walls on their borders and putting up barbed wire. When you are not a member of the European Union, it is very hard to explain to your fellow citizens that you cannot allow walls to be erected in your country for the simple reason that, not so long ago, we, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were ourselves migrants and refugees. Usually when we try to explain that to our citizens, they ask us why we are not putting up walls in the same way as the EU countries.

The situation is extremely ominous in Bosnia and Herzegovina and I really hope that today's meeting will enable us to come up with a common strategy and to take some decisions.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – I would just like to remind you that the meeting will end at 12.45 p.m. I would ask the speakers to be brief.

Where are Europe's borders? Where should the controls be sited? Who should benefit from this protection and what arrangements could be put in place to integrate those arriving from outside Europe, while at the same time clearly defining where Europe begins and ends? These are all questions to be considered.

I give the floor to Mr Munyama.

Mr Killion Munyama, Member of the Parliament of Poland* – I am a member of the Polish parliament. As you know, Poland borders Ukraine and, given the worsening situation in that country, we are expecting a massive influx of Ukrainians in Poland. Migration is a very important issue for us too, therefore. Our concern is not only with relations between Poland and Ukraine, however. We are also very worried about the situation in southern Europe.

Europe's borders are important for us. Europe does not begin and end with the European Union, of course, but the summit that took place on 29 November 2015 between the European Union and Turkey did nevertheless help to produce some answers.

In my view, it would be a good idea to hold a summit that would bring together the European Union and the Council of Europe with its 47 member states, as well as Jordan and Lebanon to identify medium- and long-term solutions. These last two countries are experiencing major problems. Like Turkey, they are taking in large numbers of Syrian refugees.

Speaking personally, as someone who came to Poland from Africa 35 years ago, it is very hard for me to say how I define myself. When I arrived in Poland as a student in 1981, immigration was not a major issue. I went on to become a university lecturer and now I am a member of parliament.

The issue of refugees and migrants in Europe is having a wide impact, affecting even people who had never been aware of the problem before. I recall how at a United Nations conference, a Norwegian lady of African origin said she had been told by Norwegians that she should go back “home” to Africa, even though she had never been there in her life.

The situation is rapidly deteriorating and everyone is affected. It is essential, therefore, that we find a way to resolve these difficulties. The most important recommendation, in my view, would be to hold a summit between the European Union, Lebanon and Jordan.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – Clearly what is needed is action by each of the entities represented here to explain that migrants and refugees can be good news for the country. You yourself are an example, Sir, of how migrants and refugees can be an asset to the host community rather than a burden.

Much work needs to be done on the ideological front in Europe to explain that migrants are part of the solution, not the problem. As parliamentarians, you, ladies and gentlemen, are better placed than anyone to convey this message. If we persist in viewing foreigners as a problem, we will be heading towards a repeat of what happened in Europe in 1914 and 1939, with predictable consequences.

I give the floor to Mr Ghambou.

Mr El Mokhtar Ghambou, Member of the House of Representatives of Morocco* – The current refugee and migrant crisis reminds me of a book by Frantz Fanon entitled “The Wretched of the Earth” and which is about colonised peoples in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Today, the context may be different but the issue is the same.

The question is how can we help? Or rather how to understand first, and then help?

These dispossessed people are not protected by any laws or institutions. That is precisely the problem and that is why a humanitarian approach needs to be adopted, because a humanitarian approach is a way of addressing the lack of legislation and institutional protection.

Our history is a rich one, albeit sometimes a very sad one.

Consider the slaves who fled from the United States to Canada, or the Jews in the 1930s, seeking places of safety. We should not be surprised by what is happening today: our ancestors did it and we can do it too, using the modern ways and means at our disposal.

Let us be honest, however. We cannot rely on humanitarian aid to help these communities. Humanitarian aid is a painkiller which soothes the wound but does not cure the disease. We should think about the countries these migrants come from and ask ourselves what can be done to develop them.

Perhaps we need a second Marshall Plan for these countries. We ought to help them and invest in them. There is no other solution. We should also think about their political institutions and ensure that they are sufficiently robust. I am thinking of sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world as well. Let us not forget, either, the problem of brain drain, which has the effect of depriving these countries of their intellectual and economic elite.

To return to Europe, however, I was very interested in what Anne Brasseur had to say about integration. As she pointed out, the biggest challenge is not migrants and refugees but rather populism. For it is populism that prevents public opinion from being receptive to migrants. You only have to look at the media, the newspapers and television to see the connection that is being made between terrorists and migrants, or non-integrated migrants.

To go back to the question put by Mr Attali, how do we convince public opinion that migration is an economic opportunity and not a burden or a threat?

We have gone through this process recently in Morocco. Nearly 80,000 migrants from Syria and other parts of Africa have arrived in the country illegally. This has affected tourism. As a country of modest means, how can we help these foreigners? Sometimes, we have to look to history for ideas. Back in the 15th century, Morocco took in refugees from Andalusia, Jews and Moors. Three or four centuries later, Andalusian music and cuisine have helped make Morocco a popular tourist destination and are an integral part of our identity.

We need to think about other models of integration.

In the United States where I worked and studied for twenty years, I never heard much talk about integration or assimilation because in the American context, if you get an education, find a job and pay your taxes, you are automatically integrated. Focusing on what makes us different, such as religion and language, is not helpful to the integration process. As I see it, we would do better to focus on what makes us part of the same community.

We have talked about this in our committee. Integration requires co-ordination, close co-operation between the country of origin and the country of residence. Morocco has recently been held up as an example for its efforts to build cultural centres and everything it has done to encourage religious leaders to combat intolerance. It is interesting to note that 80% of refugees today are from the same part of the world. It is important to think of ways of involving these countries, and to create regional blocs capable of resolving their problems themselves. More use should be made of the Arab League, the African Union, etc.

One of you mentioned borders, and asked what could be done to transform the border of violence into a bridge for economic co-operation and dialogue. I am thinking here of the Maghreb. Morocco has been calling for the development of a common border policy with its neighbours but so far, they have refused. As the Council of Europe is planning to develop partnerships with Algeria and Tunisia, it could perhaps call for neighbouring countries to develop common objectives where borders are concerned. Particularly when you see the number of refugees coming from the East and from sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr Jacques Attali, moderator – The point you make is an important one: countries of origin do have a role to play in creating the necessary conditions for co-operation between them and obviating the need for people to leave their homelands.

Speaking personally, I think we need to try to move away from the idea that we should take in migrants and refugees out of “generosity”. It seems to me that “generosity” is not the right term because everyone has good reasons for not being generous, and sometimes people are generous for the wrong reasons. On the contrary, it needs to be explained that we should take in refugees and migrants because it is in our interests to do so. Somewhere out there among the Syrian refugees, there could be another Steve Jobs. Every refugee has the potential to be a tremendous asset for the host country.

What is needed is a new discourse. We are still a long way from achieving that, however, and you, ladies and gentlemen, as parliamentarians, are better placed than anyone to create the necessary conditions for such discourse.

We have now heard from everyone who asked to speak this morning. Thank you for taking part.

The Chair – Thank you, Mr Attali. Allow me also to thank everyone who took part in this discussion, which will continue after lunch.

Since we are stopping half an hour earlier than planned, I suggest we resume at 2 p.m.

The sitting rose.

The sitting rose at 12.30 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Sustainable solutions and co-operation with the countries of origin and first asylum

Moderator: Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill, barrister, author and professor of international public law at Oxford University, United Kingdom

Panel composed of representatives of relevant committees of national parliaments:

Mr Talip Küçükcan, Director of the Institute for Middle East Studies and professor of sociology and religion, Marmara University, Istanbul

Ms Maja Gasal-Vražalica, member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr Jarosław Obremski, member of the Foreign and EU Affairs Committee of the Polish Senate

Mr Rasmus Nordqvist, member of the European Affairs Committee and member of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Danish Parliament

Mr Manlio Di Stefano, member of the Italian Parliament

The following persons spoke in the discussion:

Ms Nezha El Ouafi, Chamber of Representatives, Morocco

Mr Uroš Prikl, member of the Committee on Labour, the Family, Social Affairs and Disability of the Slovenian Parliament

Mr Éric Voruz, member of the Swiss Parliament

Mr Jean-Marie Heydt, Chair of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Mr Gert Westerveen, UNCHR representative at the Council of Europe

Mr Mehmet Çağlar, representative of the Turkish Cypriot community

Ms Annette Groth, member of the German Bundestag

Mr Quais Khader, member of the Palestinian Parliament

Mr Jarosław Obremski, member of the Foreign and EU Affairs Committee of the Polish Senate

Mr Talip Küçükcan, Director of the Institute for Middle East Studies and professor of sociology and religion, Marmara University, Istanbul

Conclusions and close by **Mr Irakli Chikovani** (Georgia, ALDE), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Integration

Statements made in languages other than French are transcribed on the basis of the interpretation and are preceded by an asterisk

Opening by Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill, barrister, author and professor of public international law at Oxford University

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*) – Although we are seeking a comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the greatest tragedy of our times, it is a great pleasure to be here with you, dear colleagues from the Council of Europe, in Paris and in France. It was here in Paris in 1793 that the French people inaugurated the principle of the right of asylum in its modern sense. They decided to grant it to foreigners banished from their own countries because they were defending the cause of freedom, and to deny it to tyrants.

In my opinion, defending asylum also involves defending democracy, strengthening fundamental principles and the values of the Council of Europe, the European Union and member states (*continued in English*)*. Defending such principles and values, ensuring the protection of refugees and thereby respect for the rights of all migrants can only strengthen us in facing the challenge of terrorism. And very often there is not much distinction between the tyrant and the terrorist.

In our discussions, we are going to look at sustainable solutions and co-operation with the countries of origin and countries of first asylum. This is such an elusive combination of goals. First of all, we have to reverse the order and put co-operation first and foremost among the goals which we are seeking to achieve, as we hope to find sustainable, durable solutions for refugees. Likewise, we are facing a migration challenge, which is compounded by a challenge of security, whether in terms of the security of the individual, of human beings or of our communities themselves.

We have a good panel who will address the different facets of the challenges facing us. I will start the discussions with a few brief words about what perhaps we can learn first of all from history, then from experience and from today and from some of the ideals we have set for ourselves in Europe.

It was in 1946 that the UN General Assembly identified the refugee problem as international in scope. That was a rather trite observation perhaps. So when it comes to refugees, no single state should have to bear the burden of responsibility on its own.

Shortly afterwards, in 1950, when the UN was just thinking about drafting the International Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Secretary General proposed that states take particular notice of the responsibilities and burdens facing the first countries of asylum. He suggested that the convention include a specific provision, an obligation, under which the states parties would agree to take a certain number of refugees from first countries of asylum in order to allow those countries to continue to fulfil their international responsibilities. A remarkable suggestion that, sadly, was not incorporated in the text of the 1951 convention, save in a non-binding recommendation in the final act.

In 1990, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs highlighted just how many jobs needed to be created in the developing world and explained that migration options could actually contribute to resolving the need for employment. Unfortunately, very little was done in the 1990s or since and we are now seeing the consequences. Much of what is facing us today in Europe and elsewhere was foreseeable. We knew how many people would be entering the workforce in the developing world and we knew from experience that refugees without solutions will often tend to move onwards.

We know, too, that the movement of peoples between states will actually affect us all, even including those who like to think themselves isolated from the crisis we are now facing in Europe.

But lessons can be learned from experience.

We did come together as a group of nations to help resolve a major refugee crisis in Indochina. We also helped to resolve a major displacement problem in Central America. States can co-operate, they can work together in their own interests and in the interests of humanitarian problems and find solutions. Latterly, however, the results have not been quite so encouraging. Already in the 1990s, with the exodus from the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo, Germany again was a major country of destination for the displaced. Its European partners were asked: "Why don't you help?" The same was true with *Mare Nostrum*. Again no answer was forthcoming.

Although the context is slightly different, lessons can also be learned from the meeting held in Valletta in November. The discussions between European and African countries quite clearly exposed the limits of unilateralism. We will come back to this later. In any case, the Valletta statement shows that the sending

states, the countries of origin are looking for a deal on a better basis than that offered in terms of its conditionality and more for more.

But to end on a positive note, I would highlight the remarkable examples of charity and humanity amongst the peoples of Europe, for instance in helping those who are on the Balkan route or those who are trapped in the “Jungle” in Calais. However, no matter what resources of compassion and humanity the people of Europe have, they also need reassurance.

Mr Talip Küçükcan (Turkey)* – I should like to share my ideas with you and describe the action which Turkey has taken since the start of the crisis in terms of ongoing management of the mass influx of migrants.

The war in Syria has triggered an unprecedented migrant and refugee crisis in Europe. According to UN data, the number of people who will seek refuge in Turkey and Lebanon is set to rise. As long as the crisis in Syria continues, I fear that the challenge facing us in the months and, indeed, years ahead will only get greater. Real political will is needed if we want to tackle the root causes of the problem.

The refugees and migrants find themselves in dire conditions, even though Turkey and other countries are doing what they can to help them. Conditions will deteriorate with the onset of winter.

The international community must respond and meet the fundamental needs of migrants and refugees. Of course, regulations do exist at regional and international level, but it is mindsets which are actually at issue here. Sometimes regulations are not good enough to bring about a solution; we need to work together.

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, Turkey has been maintaining an open-door policy and welcoming all those who are fleeing from violence in their own country. There are 9 million displaced people in Syria, while others have left the country.

Turkey respects the principle of non-refoulement at its border and provides the refugees with temporary protection. At the start of the crisis, I visited the Turkish-Syrian border and the camps. We could see plumes of smoke rising up on the Syrian side. The security forces were receiving the refugees and registering them. You could see the fear in the eyes of all those arriving in our country. To date, almost 2.2 million Syrians have been taken in, along with Iraqis and Afghans, giving a total of over 2.5 million refugees. The numbers are possibly still larger than the data from the records. It is a huge political challenge which Turkey and the neighbouring countries are having to contend with.

According to the UNHCR, Turkey is currently the country playing host to the largest number of refugees in the world.

25 temporary protection centres have been opened by the Turkish government for Syrian refugees, who are provided with food, accommodation and access to health care. There are 650 000 school-age children. This is an issue we should concentrate on when it comes to ensuring peaceful coexistence between the host communities and the refugee groups. 4 000 children do not have access to proper schooling. Those who are outside the camps do not have access to school. The government is taking action, but the Syrian families keep their children out of school. When they do attend, we try to combine the courses by providing Syrian teaching in their own language alongside sections of the Turkish curriculum. Some receive online teaching in Arabic. After that they will pass tests and obtain qualifications recognised by the Turkish authorities. The various measures will introduce the young people to the culture of the country they are living in and enable them to learn its language.

We have great needs in terms of classrooms, teachers and funding to implement this strategy. To date, Turkey has spent more than \$8 billion, although it has received less than \$500 million from the international community. This situation is untenable for Turkey.

Burden sharing is vital. There are some promising developments, however. Turkey is the country which has taken in the biggest number of Syrians and it is doing everything possible to minimise irregular migration. Turkish coastguards are continuing their operations to maintain safety and security at sea, which are costing €5 million per month. Turkey is surrounded by seas and it is difficult to control its maritime borders, just as it is difficult to guard the border with Syria, which is over 900 km long.

Since the beginning of 2015, Turkish coastguards have rescued more than 80 000 migrants at sea who had been in the hands of smugglers. You no doubt all remember the pictures of the child's body found on a Turkish beach. Two smugglers were arrested. They have been brought to court and are facing prison sentences of 35 years.

We all agree that efforts to combat migrant smugglers and human traffickers need to be intensified, but without security measures to address the root causes of the problem such as political and economic instability in the countries of origin, these partial efforts will only provide limited solutions. A sustainable solution will be possible only if the conflict and violence come to an end.

We are willing to take in asylum seekers, but we all know that they will not stay in the country. We have already experienced that. In 1979, following the Iranian revolution, more than 1 million Iranians passed through Turkey on their way to settle in the United States and Canada. We cannot force migrants to stay, in spite of the efforts made by the government to integrate them and offer them normal living conditions.

It is of utmost importance that the destination countries support peace processes and the establishment of peace in these conflict-ridden areas. Humanitarian investments are needed in transit countries and countries of origin so as to improve standards of living. At present, however, the bombing is continuing in Syria. Of course, we must combat IS, which is a terrorist organisation, but we must reconsider whether the efforts we are deploying are sufficient to resolve the issue. Very strong political will is needed to stabilise Syria and other countries from which these waves of migrants are coming. To find a durable solution to the crisis, Turkey has been advocating the idea of setting up camps in northern Syria. This idea has been brought to the attention of the international community, but it has not responded very positively to the suggestion. Some people are now arguing that the 2 million Syrians should stay in Turkey.

If the Syrian crisis continues, the number of people fleeing to Turkey and Lebanon is bound to increase. It would seem that there is no short-term solution. Turkey is ready to co-operate with all the parties in order to overcome the crisis and find a sustainable solution based on shared responsibility and increased humanitarian aid for the migrants.

The migration crisis is not only regional; it has major global repercussions. It demands concerted action from all countries. Turkey has a long history as a country of migration and it is at the crossroads of migration routes. It also has experience of emigration, with millions of Turks living abroad, including in France, where they contribute to the development of their host country. That is the positive aspect. But we should be honest, fair and frank here. Europe does not really care about the fate of the refugees in Turkey, and is not interested in them until they arrive on its territory. This point was put to the EU recently. On 15 October, Turkey and the EU signed the EU-Turkey joint action plan. EU and Turkish leaders also held a summit meeting in Brussels on 29 November. Under the agreement signed, the EU will provide Turkey with €3 billion. The funding will be invested in various infrastructure projects. While Turkey and the EU do already co-operate, their co-operation will be strengthened and deepened.

I would make one final point in conclusion.

The attacks in Paris and other European cities are causing some people to confuse migration and security issues. A distinction has to be made between the two; otherwise, migration will be seen in a very negative way. The negative representation of migrants in the media and the critical content circulating in the social media are dangerous. We therefore need to look into this issue.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Thank you, Mr Talip Küçükcan, for the information which you have just given about a front-line country.

During the Iran-Iraq war, which lasted throughout the 1980s, Turkey also took in hundreds of thousands of refugees from the two countries. Other countries had a duty to meet their responsibilities under international law. The solution adopted during the first Gulf War was Security Council Resolution 688 and the creation of a no-fly zone in northern Iraq.

Security is a major challenge facing us today. It distorts public perceptions of migrants. The language used today is like that used in the 1990s, with links between population displacement, freedom of movement and the resulting difficulties.

As Mr Michele Nicoletti cannot be with us today, I give the floor to Ms Gasal-Vražalica.

Ms Maja Gasal-Vražalica (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*)* – I should like to tell you about migration in my country.

The migration and asylum sector has been evolving for the past 15 years on the basis of two predetermined objectives, involving the development of a quality system of migration and asylum at state level. It should

be noted that the situation in our country is complex because we are not a centralised state. Responsibilities are broken down at various levels. Given the crisis now facing the world, we have done everything possible to deal with the issues by establishing a national system. Following the 2014 elections, we passed national legislation governing asylum and migration. Bosnia and Herzegovina is driven by a desire to move forward and will shortly be granted EU official accession candidate status. It is therefore vital for the country that its legislation is in line with European law.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has passed relevant legislation and is still working to bring it into line with EU standards. It is important to underline the fact, it is constantly said we have chosen to turn towards the EU. But when an opposition party tables amendments on bringing legislation into line with the EU, the majority responds that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have to do so, as it is not yet an EU member. The opposition sometimes has a difficult role to play. However, we have presented many amendments in the human rights committee with a view to improving the law on asylum and migration.

Our neighbour, Croatia, joined the EU recently and we have to take account of this development. Now Bosnia and Herzegovina does not just have a border with Croatia, but a border with the EU.

Croatia's admission to the EU in 2013 was a key development for Bosnia and Herzegovina as regards the migration situation. We now share a border with an EU country. That means increased responsibility for controlling the border in respect of legal and illegal migration. In building our capacity to control and manage the flows of refugees, Bosnia and Herzegovina is taking all necessary steps at national level so that conduct toward refugees is humane and in line with the standards of international law.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is not an attractive country for refugees. Many of its own citizens want to leave the country and it suffers from emigration itself. Nevertheless, assistance and advice services at national level have been stepped up institutionally, with various experts, including technical experts. The state border police force is in place, and we are also recruiting the additional human resources required.

All other services are regulated by the lower-level entities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, legislation on the movement and residence of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers is still a regional matter. We have set a procedure in motion for two separate laws to govern two areas more specifically. Last week, the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed the law on asylum and the one on migration is in the process of being adopted.

The law on asylum is in line with almost all the EU directives. Only a few points requiring additional funding have not been covered.

The Republic of Macedonia is having to contend with huge numbers of refugees and migrants. The figures available to us indicate that over 110 000 refugees have crossed Serbia on the way to Hungary over the past 11 months. However, the impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina is small because the migrants and refugees only pass through the country.

The refugees tend to opt for safer and cheaper routes to Hungary, which is an EU member and, above all, is in the Schengen area. Going through Croatia gives access to the EU but not to the Schengen area, as Croatia has not yet joined it. This means that the refugees are not within a border-free area.

If the Republic of Croatia joined the Schengen area, which is due to happen shortly, the number of refugees attempting to cross the Croatian border would very probably increase. That would mean more refugees passing through Bosnia and Herzegovina as a transit country.

A barbed wire fence has been erected between Hungary and Serbia and controls have been stepped up. This means that we will no doubt see more refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the months ahead. They could enter via the north-eastern border and then move on towards the EU. If the migration routes changed, a new corridor could be set up in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To date, the refugees have not wanted to stay in emerging countries like Macedonia, Serbia or Greece because their goal is to enter the core area of the EU. Nevertheless, the number of people in transit is posing new challenges to the transit countries in organisational, security, humanitarian and financial terms.

As Bosnians were refugees themselves not that long ago, we know what it means to flee from your home with just a small plastic bag of belongings. I remember being a refugee. Every day, we wondered why the major powers were not doing what was needed to put an end to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today, I still ask myself: why Srebrenica, Sarajevo and Vukovar? Unfortunately, I have not found the answer. It will probably take a long time until everyone realises that the war did not serve any purpose,

especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina's case. Above all, it created many victims and much suffering. We are still seeing the consequences on a daily basis today.

I do not agree with my Serbian colleague that the war can be stopped. We can take action and help and welcome refugees and migrants, but, as pointed out by my Italian colleague, Mr Di Stefano, we must all take the necessary action in our parliaments to avoid arms sales and trafficking. We must all continue loudly to condemn the harm caused by war, which we must oppose on a daily basis.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Thank you for your comments. I believe the time has come to plan and prepare for the future, as these movements are no doubt going to continue. Thank you also for striking a personal note. It seems to me that the views of refugees themselves are too often absent from official political debate.

Mr Jarosław Obremski (*Poland*)* – Throughout history, Poles were often migrants, fleeing from repression and poverty. We fled to friendly countries so that we could keep fighting for independence, for our country. At present, some 250 000 Ukrainian citizens are living and working in Poland. In other words, we seem to understand the problem of "migration", but that does not mean that we have no concerns. The scale of the phenomenon exceeds the financial, social, political and housing capabilities of the EU.

Poland has a difficulty. When it takes in Syrian refugees, they stay in the country for a month at the most before moving on to Germany to find better paid employment and better lives. They dreamt of going to Germany or Sweden, not settling in Poland.

I mentioned the EU's political capabilities. In Poland, we are afraid because migration is a challenge that may have an impact in terms of anti-EU parties. That could ultimately lead to a real danger for Europe itself.

We must provide effective protection for those in need, while doing everything to protect the lives of the people who are crossing the Mediterranean and those living in camps. You mentioned the winter, temperatures are set to fall. We must also bear in mind the dangers which they faced in their own countries.

In September, the EU sent out a naive message: "Come to us. We invite everybody". But in the space of a month, we turned uncritical waiting into the sealing of borders. That was a big shock for everyone. The EU's invitation only increased the demand for the services of people smugglers. The great increase in demand reduced the quality of the services and led to losses of human lives.

By the way, the barriers at the Hungarian border are not the result of the selfishness of the authorities in Budapest but the result of a lack of European solidarity. Unfortunately, solidarity has been lacking in Europe for five years now. Europe has entered a period of turbulence. Migration is a global phenomenon, and the responses must be global. Without agreement with Turkey we will achieve nothing. Poland believes that the agreement with Turkey and the arrangements reached at the Malta summit are right. We are going to follow them, including financially, but we must strengthen the Balkan countries with appropriate funding.

We must also support the countries with the largest percentage of refugees: Lebanon and Jordan. We are already part of the mobility partnership with Jordan. Moreover, Poland has taken in 900 refugees from Beirut and is going to enter into a mobility partnership with Lebanon. We must combat irregular migration, especially from Lebanon. That is a test for rebuilding citizens' trust in Europe. The EU must show that it is capable of dealing with the situation.

Migrants, in particular Afghans, are also travelling to Norway through Russia.

In the long term, more affluent countries like those in the EU must share their wealth by investing in jobs and social and educational infrastructure in the countries with the biggest pressure for economic migration, especially the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. We must give priority to the countries open to constructive co-operation, like Ethiopia.

Perhaps the transfer of funds to Africa under the Paris climate agreement will also reduce migration pressure.

For now, the phenomenon is faster than our answers, we are falling behind. What is more, I am afraid that the political correctness around the migrant problem creates a nagging anxiety. The crisis in September was presented in the media as an opportunity and interesting challenge. We were told that a multicultural society

in Europe was the key to success. Unfortunately, that contradicts the facts. To us, that is all just propaganda. We should discuss the subject more openly.

Proclaiming zero tolerance for the enemies of tolerance may sound good, but I am afraid that it will end up blocking discussion. Our efforts to combat intolerance have a tendency to spread messages of intolerance. That is why populist parties must be allowed to take part in debate. Open discussion is necessary. There is nothing in common between terrorism and migration. However, from a political point of view and in the public subconscious, links have been established.

I will end with three points – stopping illegal migration, building improved camps as quickly as possible and identifying funding for long-term assistance – and a suggestion: we should stop trying to export European democratic values outside of Europe quite simply because we do not know how to do so and have generated instability with ill-prepared military interventions. We do it without knowing how to follow through.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Thank you for those conclusions and also for including the challenges of solidarity in the debate, in both its internal and its external aspects. Of course, there has been a failure of solidarity in the EU. As you pointed out, this was one of the aspects which affected the Hungarian attitude but not only that. It is part of the challenges facing other EU member countries. It is remarkable in many respects because the member states recognise the principle of sincere co-operation in the EU treaties and declare in the functioning treaty that asylum and migration are based on solidarity and also on the fair sharing of responsibilities – which has not yet been translated into reality, as you rightly pointed out.

Mr Rasmus Nordqvist (*Denmark*)* – A few weeks back, I visited Lesbos, where I saw a heart-breaking humanitarian crisis. Refugees are leaving the shores of Turkey in their thousands in the pursuit of protection in Europe. It is a crisis in which thousands and thousands of people are on the run.

First asylum countries such as Greece, Turkey and Italy are left with a huge responsibility and challenge, which Europe should help to alleviate. It is important that we recognise that the crisis has deep political roots, mainly originating in the lack of political solutions to the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. But it is also a crisis of uneven development and the uneven distribution and use of resources on a global scale. Public development aid is falling because we are spending more in our own countries to help refugees.

The situation in the refugees' and migrants' countries of origin is a core issue for us to address in our approach to the current crisis. It might sound ambitious and even naïve, but we need to show the courage to discuss the bigger picture. This includes both reconsidering the role of Europe in conflict resolution and enforcing our nations' diplomatic efforts across the globe. Indeed, a comprehensive approach means that we must address the root causes of the streams of refugees and migration. I actually believe that Europe must play a much more active role in promoting soft power as a tool to promote democracy and progress. The same values as we build our European co-operation on should be projected in our dealing with the refugee crisis. We need a more comprehensive approach to foreign policy and co-operation to be integrated into our ways of dealing with refugees in Europe.

Remember: the Council of Europe as an idea and an institution grew from the aspiration to ensure peace and co-operation between European countries. As citizens of Europe, we have benefited greatly from this. Now it is our moral obligation to use this platform to strengthen peace and co-operation in all war and conflict zones.

The current crisis is also closely linked to the global climate crisis. In this light, we are witnessing only the beginning of migration to our part of the world. In the coming years, many more refugees will leave their home countries behind in search of protection and a better life. We therefore need an approach that combines our goals of securing a sustainable future free of fossil fuels while coping with migrants and refugees fleeing the effects of climate change. We need to be prepared for migration on a much larger scale than today. We therefore need to invest our efforts into coping with the challenges of migration through long-term sustainable co-operation with and support to vulnerable states.

The huge inflows of people into Europe are also rooted in our own political architecture and Europe's failure to deliver here at home. We have failed to translate the political tools and shared values and laws we have at hand into a functional and much more humane response to the crisis.

Europe is standing at a crossroads. The European project of ensuring peace and co-operation among the member states is being severely tested. Will we as a community of shared values fragment even further or will we stand the test and engage in serious co-operation?

Is Europe willing to secure peace in the context of a project with a humanitarian and egalitarian basis? The crisis is European in the sense that it is testing our capacity and willingness to co-operate in an unprecedented manner.

As I see it today, we as a European community are facing several challenges on many fronts. To begin with, I sense a lack of shared understanding of what actually constitutes the current crisis. First and foremost, we need to clearly acknowledge that this crisis is both a European matter and crisis. We cannot afford to silence the crisis by exporting the problems to countries outside the region. The solution does not just lie in placing adverts in Lebanese newspapers asking people not to come. We cannot ensure a humane response to the crisis through unilateral interventions by individual countries. As a community, we cannot afford to turn our backs on the states under the heaviest pressure. For the sake of the refugees and of our unity, we need to co-operate across borders, as the refugee crisis is essentially transnational. We therefore need to co-operate and show solidarity with those countries working under the greatest pressure to make sure the refugees and migrants receive the best treatment possible according to international standards.

Right now, the lack of willingness to co-operate across European boundaries and to unite to resolve this matter reflects the internal crisis affecting Europe. To move forward, we need to work to establish a much stronger sense of ownership of the crisis and acknowledge it as our problem. This also requires a shift from too much focus on border protection to a stronger focus on refugee protection as the dominant political practice.

To sum up, the European crisis involves acknowledging the refugee and migrant crisis as a European challenge of a political nature, as a crisis embedded in human tragedy. There is an urgent need for joint European intervention based on co-operation that complies with our international obligations. Without European co-operation, this is not possible.

If we only ask half the question, we will only get half the answer. We cannot talk about the hotspots without talking about their relocation, we cannot talk about sending back migrants not entitled to be here without talking about development aid, and we cannot support migrants more broadly unless we address the various issues which arise. This very complex problem involves many other aspects, including our trade policy, our cultural policy and education policy. That is why my message today is that we must acknowledge that it is an extremely complex European problem which affects all areas of European policy.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Thank you for your vision of Europe, for reminding us of the various issues arising in the context of climate change and the need for preparedness. Thank you also for acknowledging that the issues are multifaceted. It is a sad reflection on the international community that ever since 1921, states have tended to see refugee problems as temporary. And even though the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees became permanent in 2003, policy-makers still tend to see refugee problems as temporary, without being able to say how long it will take before a solution is found.

Before opening up the debate, I will give the floor to Mr Manlio Di Stefano. He spoke this morning about possible short and medium-term solutions and is now representing Italy on this panel.

Mr Manlio Di Stefano (*Italy*)* – I am a member of the Five-Star Movement. This morning, I spoke about possible urgent to short-term solutions. I should now like to discuss sustainable long-term solutions. We need to be clear about one point: immigration has socio-political implications and they have to be addressed as such. I have attended many conferences about migration. We still very often use the term “emergency”. However, migration is not an emergency, it is a phenomenon which has always existed and which only varies in terms of flows and quantity. If we had proper organisational capacities which had been built up over the years we would never have to talk about emergencies.

What are the key issues?

There is the issue of the resources of Africa and the Middle East. We should think about the following: it is not so much a matter of “paying more” but of “taking less out”.

On top of this issue are climate change and conflict. According to UN estimates, over the past 10 years, the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria have generated over 10 million new refugees. In 10 years of conflicts, global flows of refugees have grown from 40 million to 60 million. That demonstrates the link between those wars and migration. Europe has been a player in these wars. We must not forget that the friendships which we maintain with certain tyrants sometimes harm the well-being of refugees. One point seems obvious: we must put an end to unbridled military interventionism. I repeat the point, because we have witnessed intervention in Libya without a UN mandate, intervention in Iraq and intervention in Afghanistan. Today, the Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, announced that he would be willing to go back into Iraq to defend a dam which is under attack from IS. As I see it, that is simply a new way of intervening in Iraq without a mandate and repeating the mistakes of the past.

I now come to administrative developments.

We need to harmonise the procedures. In Europe, the average length of time between the submission of an asylum application and the decision is six months, with the figures varying from country to country. In Italy, the process takes 18 months. That is a real problem, which is, of course, linked to the number of people arriving, but not only that. Migrants have absolutely no idea of how they will be dealt with, whether they arrive in Cyprus, Greece, Turkey or Italy, as each country employs a different procedure. Here I am referring to the shortcomings in Italy. I am not saying that the other countries are not blameless, but we should attempt to introduce a harmonised procedure.

We also know that Mafia groups are involved in applications for asylum and residence permits. This was demonstrated by the Mafia Capitale scandal disclosed in Italy. A migrant in a reception centre costs the state approximately €35 a day. Some are accommodated in hotels. The Mafia has got into this business, which offers potential turnover of €200 million a year. Mafia groups have therefore found their own interest in managing migrants.

We need to develop common European standards here. The larger the reception centres are, the more difficult it becomes to manage them and the more complicated it is to identify cases of corruption. That is why accommodating 4 000 migrants in a single reception centre is inconceivable. That would mean creating a city within a city, requiring policing and so on. It is impossible. The ratio between the number of migrants and the number of residents should be one to a thousand. That requires the widespread distribution of small reception centres across the whole of Europe, with no more than 20 migrants per nationality.

Like you, I have visited reception centres. What happens there is a reflection of the situation in the migrants' countries of origin, with fratricidal fighting between Shias and Sunnis and between Pakistanis and Afghans. If we separate them, we will avoid the violence within the ethnic groups and will encourage their integration.

We must also revise the Dublin regulation. I have been saying so for three years. Europe is at last coming round to the idea, but there has been no real action yet.

I note that some countries closed their borders overnight. France closed the border with Italy at Ventimiglia in a very cowardly fashion. One day the borders are open, the next they are closed. Sometimes the Dublin regulation applies, sometimes it does not. That is the nub of the problem.

Recently, the EU sent Italy a memorandum indicating that if it did not identify refugees properly it ran the risk of sanctions. Under the terms of international law, we cannot force migrants to identify themselves and give their fingerprints. The fact is they do not want to be identified because of the Dublin regulation. If we revised it, after identification, refugees would be able to choose their destination countries and would agree to cooperate with the police. They would not be forced to stay in Italy for 18 months and would be able to go where they wanted. Migrants would identify themselves of their own accord. It should be noted that some migrants actually burn their fingers when they are still on the makeshift vessels so that they cannot give fingerprints. That is all a consequence of the Dublin regulation. When we get back to our own parliaments, we must loudly proclaim the need to put an end to the Dublin regulation. I have tabled corresponding motions in the Italian Parliament and at the Council of Europe.

I also propose that we set up an international agency for asylum seekers. I do not wish to hear about hotspots solely in national or European territory; we need to conclude bilateral agreements with the countries of origin on establishing hotspots there because migrants put their lives at risk to reach Europe, assistance is needed here from the UNHCR, the Red Cross and international bodies. We need to create places in the countries of origin where migrants can apply to go to one country or another, on the basis of stable quotas. Economic migrants could go to the United Kingdom, Australia or the United States as they chose if the numbers were within the quotas.

Offering migrants a legal route to Europe and the West is vital. At present, they cannot come to Europe by aeroplane. Populist parties tend to say that migrants should just get on a plane, but that is not possible.

Apart from quotas, EU countries should apply harmonised asylum legislation, employ the same procedures, agree on the management of migrant flows with the countries of origin and apply a mutual recognition system. Accordingly, migrants recognised as refugees in Italy must be recognised as such throughout the EU. We have wasted too much time here.

In terms of compensation, we have also proposed that the Frontex offices be transferred to Lampedusa because the island has been completely destroyed and has been deserted by tourists. Transferring Frontex to Lampedusa would therefore be fair compensation.

There are two sides to the same coin: economic migrants and asylum seekers. We must support the idea of offering economic migrants the possibility of coming to Europe by legal means. We must therefore create legal routes for economic migrants who are fleeing from crises or a lack of job opportunities. They need to be able to go to a German, Italian or French embassy and then go to the country of their choice subject to the availability of quota places. If the quotas for one year have already been used up, the migrants will try again the following year or opt for another country. We must offer them this opportunity.

With regard to the fair distribution of reception centres, I have made a proposal in Italy, but I think it could be interesting for Europe as well. The idea is to employ young people to help on the various boards dealing with asylum. They could be trained free of charge by the UNHCR, which is already involved in these local boards for the purpose of reducing the waiting time between applications for asylum and decisions. Migrants would therefore find out more quickly whether they could go to another country.

To achieve all these measures, we need to free ourselves from lobbies, big companies and all those who seek to speculate with migrants, migrants' lives and the countries of origin. If our hands were free, we could make progress in this direction.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Thank you, Mr Di Stefano, for that rich list of suggestions.

The Dublin regulation has attracted a great deal of attention at the Council of Europe. I would commend the report from September prepared by one of your colleagues concerning the implementation of the regulation and its practical consequences.

Debate

Ms Nezha El Ouafi (*Morocco*) – This parliamentary platform is very useful because it avoids our individual countries and parliaments discussing the issues and passing legislation in isolation.

Morocco is one of the frontline countries. A very far-reaching change is taking place. Economic migrants and asylum seekers are now turning towards the countries of the South, including Morocco. In 2013, the National Human Rights Council presented a report on the situation in Morocco to King Mohammed VI. It indicated that 44 000 migrants wanted to travel to Europe but that the draconian measures taken under the 1991 agreement between the EU and Morocco had forced the migrants, including many from sub-Saharan countries, to remain in Morocco. In January 2014, 38 applications for legal status were granted, which involved overcoming many challenges and constraints. However, it was also an opportunity for Morocco as a multicultural and diverse country. It has started a process of democratic transition, which involves challenges and constraints, but it is proceeding courageously and with real political determination.

We are working in three areas:

On the institutional level, we have set up an interdepartmental justice and home affairs body. The relevant intergovernmental human rights body has lobbied for legal status for immigrants, who are able to appeal to the regional offices of the National Human Rights Council.

The government has worked on the legislative aspects and tabled three bills in parliament, including one on asylum and one on legal status, which is actually a law on residence. The previous law on residence in Morocco was called the law on the entry and exit of foreigners. Now we are talking about foreigners' right of residence.

Lastly, there is an anti-trafficking law. Morocco is a transnational country and is faced with the problem of human trafficking.

I would recommend the establishment of a South-North parliamentary platform to discuss these complex issues affecting our shared destiny, in particular the Dublin regulation. While it concerns Europe, we are also interested in the hotspot measures and all aspects of the harmonisation of migration policy.

The countries of the South need the good practices of their counterparts in the North. But the countries of the North also need to listen and hear the views of the South. There is a great need at present for a South-North parliamentary platform to tackle the effects of the crisis, and also for a strategic plan because we as politicians must provide a political response for dealing with or helping to resolve the conflict in the region.

Mr Uroš Prikl (*Slovenia*)* – Thank you for inviting me to this conference, and congratulations on organising it.

In Slovenia, we have learned the value of close regional and interregional co-operation. During the past few weeks, we have been confronted with massive flows of migrants and refugees along the eastern Mediterranean and western Balkan route. More than 300 000 people entered Slovenian territory, a figure equivalent to 14% of the Slovenian population. We are doing our best to deal with the massive flows of refugees and migrants and we are trying to give protection to the most vulnerable.

Migration is a global challenge, but a global opportunity as well. Our common action should not be aimed against migrants, but at better management of migration flows. Further efforts are needed to tackle the root causes, especially poverty, political instability, conflicts and failure to respect human rights and the rule of law, as well as the effects of climate change. No solution will be viable unless these causes are tackled effectively.

Particular emphasis should also be placed on diplomatic engagement, as we must find political solutions to the ongoing crises and conflicts. Better co-operation and enhanced political dialogue with the countries most affected by flows of migrants are absolutely vital. We need comprehensive dialogue with our African partners so that we can deal jointly with these massive flows.

As far as co-operation between the EU and African countries is concerned, the Khartoum process has been followed by the Valletta Summit. From the outset, Slovenia supported the holding of this summit of countries of origin, transit countries and destination countries, which discussed the problem, its underlying causes and ways of dealing most effectively with migration. Open dialogue is needed because only dialogue and co-operation between the countries of origin, destination countries and transit countries will enable us to find a solution.

The action plan produced at the Valletta Summit seeks to deal properly with short, medium and long-term migration. The commitments made at the summit also involve combating irregular migration and migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Slovenia also welcomes the establishment of the EU emergency trust fund, which will allow the effective implementation of all the commitments made.

Slovenia will continue to help develop projects in African countries. It will contribute to the European fund and will use all the multilateral channels available to take action.

Mr Éric Voruz (*Switzerland*) – Everything I have heard is very interesting. However, there is always a “but”. One speaker said that the Council of Europe speaks with one language, but there are different languages in national parliaments afterwards.

Switzerland agrees with the various statements. Jacques Attali said this morning that migration should be an opportunity, not a problem. Nevertheless, once we get back to our own countries, it does become a problem. And here I am talking about my country of Switzerland, where the people always have the final say. The people vote a lot because the populist parties often launch popular initiatives. One of them is having to be implemented because the people voted against mass migration. Our government does not know how to implement it because, although it is not a member of the EU, Switzerland is a signatory to the Schengen and Dublin agreements on freedom of movement and asylum. It is very difficult for our federal Minister of Justice and Police to negotiate thereafter with the EU. If the EU refuses to revise the agreements signed, how will Switzerland be able to implement a decision taken by the people?

The populist party is the largest party in the country. It won another 11 seats in the federal parliament three weeks ago. Fortunately, it does not have a majority, however. The federal government is a coalition

government and no party can achieve a majority on its own. The seven ministers in the federal government comprise two populist ministers, two socialists, two radical liberals and a Christian Democrat. Public action demands efforts to achieve a degree of consensus.

There have been sweeping generalisations. Under pressure from that populist party, the federal parliament has banned asylum seekers from registering with embassies abroad. The populist party said that foreigners only needed to get on an aeroplane and that relevant legislation would be applied in the host country. That is absurd. Refugees very often do not have the resources to fly directly to host countries.

I have heard our Polish colleagues with interest. Poland has just elected a new parliament in which the populist party is in the majority. The new Prime Minister had all the European flags removed when she spoke on television. In some quarters it is said that the Polish government should ask to withdraw from the EU, as should Hungary, which wishes to do so.

I was very interested to hear the solutions presented by Mr Di Stefano. However, we would need to implement them jointly, as we have some problems with Italy, too. The Legate party, which is very much in the minority in Switzerland but has a majority in the canton of Ticino, has launched an initiative attacking cross-border workers.

We will have to find reasonable solutions to move forward here, and it will not be an easy task.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*) – Democracy is certainly an unruly beast.

Mr Jean-Marie Heydt, Chair of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre – I am perturbed by some aspects of the debate because of the omnipresence of the EU, which is quite understandable but is somehow distorting the discussions. Clearly, the financial resources and the number of people representing some of its member states are likely to distort the debate and, above all, the statements made and actions carried out. This leads me to ask the following question: against this background, is it not possible for the 47 Council of Europe member countries and countries like Morocco, from which we have heard speakers, and Tunisia which are not members of the Council, to find solutions of their own that can be taken into account? This all ties in with the recent resolutions and the comprehensive list distributed to us. Some have been followed up at the Committee of Ministers because it is at intergovernmental level that practical action can be taken.

I heard the comments by the Swiss member. Your Assembly has taken some fine decisions and issued some fine recommendations. What action is taken on them so that they are given effect at intergovernmental level at the Council of Europe, beyond the EU which moves forward under its own system?

Mr Gert Westerveen, UNHCR representative at the Council of Europe* – On behalf of the UNHCR, I would like to make some short remarks on integration, returns and responsibility sharing in Europe.

Mr Attali said that migrants should be seen as a source of enrichment for society. I would like to echo that. The Swedish representative said that integration poses logistical problems. Europe has a history of integrating large numbers of migrants. The moderator mentioned the international co-operation for Indochinese refugees. Between 1984 and 1995, almost 1 million Vietnamese refugees were settled in various regions of the world, including thousands in Europe. They are now normal citizens among us. Experience proves that integration is possible therefore.

I would refer to the work done by the Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which is very important. Knowledge has been acquired and useful experience built up. Of course, the ideological climate is different; the Vietnamese refugees were escaping from communism. Nowadays, our approach to refugees arriving in our countries is somewhat different. It is a task for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and national parliaments to overcome that obstacle. All conflicts eventually come to an end. It will be the same in Syria. At that point, many refugees will want to return home. We need to keep that in mind and to have some embryonic plans in place to help them to settle in their own country again.

The Dublin regulation concerns the responsibilities which all parties must bear. Not everything is bad, the criteria on family reunification, for instance, are positive and should be kept. However, the default criterion applied to refugees arriving for the first time in the EU is the problem, and I believe there is an inevitable need to develop in the near future a new system under which all European states will bear their share of responsibility. This should include a distribution scheme, which would ensure that refugees were properly

received and had a uniform status. Once they have been granted refugee status, it should be possible for them to move about within the EU and build their own futures. Refugees should not be forced to stay in one country for years but should, instead, be able to move forward in line with their abilities.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*) – A uniform status is one of the objectives which have not been achieved within the EU, although it would go a long way to solving some of the problems.

Mr Mehmet Çağlar (*Cyprus*)* – I would like to know whether there is a link between European countries and the Arab neighbours of Syria, Iraq and other countries. What are Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the other countries doing to provide the refugees with humanitarian and financial assistance together with European countries?

If we want to find a solution, we must tackle the root causes of the current problem and share our experience and responsibilities in order to create a new system. We need to support the countries which are not able to help the refugees at local level if they are to be offered better living conditions. That has to be done at local level. For example, for 50 years, Cyprus has had many refugees, and many difficulties have still not been resolved. As the population of the island is small, European countries have accepted us. I would call on all countries to focus on this problem, too. Maybe it is not the right moment to mention the Cyprus question, but the Turkish and Greek Cypriots have been in a negotiation process since 1968. And now we are in 2015! All countries should focus on this kind of problem.

Some 200 000 Turkish Cypriots live in Cyprus, but 600 000, or three times more, live elsewhere in the world. The refugee problem is dangerous for the whole world, both for European countries and for other countries, too. That is why we must co-ordinate our efforts to find a solution, not only for today's refugees but also for all the problems from the last century.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*) – Thank you for referring to the possible role of diasporas.

Ms Annette Groth (*Germany*)* – You said that we have to combat Islamic State. I quite agree with you on that point. There is hard evidence that the Turkish authorities are supporting IS. Every day and every night, Turkish soldiers leave for Syria. You can read it in the newspapers. I saw it myself when I visited Kobanê, I saw lorries full of weapons. There is a problem of double standards here: you cannot condemn a movement of that kind on the one hand and not really combat it on the other. As far as redistribution and the Dublin regulation are concerned, our Chancellor, Mrs Merkel, decided in October not to apply the Dublin regulation to Syrian refugees, which was welcomed by many Syrians. Large numbers arrived in Germany without necessarily having intended to do so. The Dublin regulation is now being implemented. We are not sending refugees back to Greece because of the severe refugee crisis there. For my part, I do not think that we should send them back to other countries either.

Many speakers have wondered about the revision of the Dublin regulation.

What kind of system do we want? Once asylum status has been granted in Germany or elsewhere, it should be valid in the other countries. This is a hard political struggle given how widely the positions vary from one country to the next.

I am opposed to distribution mechanisms and quota systems because we should not force people to go to countries where they do not want to settle. In my view, that is inhumane treatment. If I were a refugee, I would not want to be forced to go to Hungary, for instance, where I know I would not be welcome.

That is why we must come up with other solutions and discuss this concretely. We have a very difficult task ahead of us.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – Mrs Merkel actually referred to Dublin as obsolete. Under an alternative system, the emphasis will have to be placed on equity.

Mr Quais Khader (*Palestine*)* – We are meeting in the premises of the French National Assembly. Before going any further, I should like to express my full solidarity with the French people and my sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the barbaric attacks which France recently suffered. I believe I speak on behalf of the Palestinian people as a whole in condemning those atrocious crimes.

No people in the world have experienced the tragedy of being refugees as much as the Palestinians. Two thirds of the Palestinians are refugees, and most of them have been chronic refugees for seven decades.

We understand that the only durable and dignified solution to the refugee problem, any refugee problem, is to enable the refugees to go back to their homes and to live there in security and peace. Long-term solutions to the refugee crisis need to address the root causes of the problem, including the grave instability which results from the perpetual civil wars spreading in most of the countries of origin, especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

Western Europe must admit that it bears a major share of the responsibility for the creation of this explosive situation. As Mr Obremski said, the policy of exporting democracy through military intervention, be it direct or indirect, proved to be a staggering failure, apart from being morally unjustified. A radical change in policies is needed. Europe must strive to achieve political settlements for the conflicts that haunt the region so that stability is at last restored. That is the solution which we want for the current crisis. Above all, we must not exclude the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recent events prove once again that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the main causes of instability in the region. Europe should therefore contribute to the settlement of the conflict by bringing pressure to bear on the Israelis to make them respect their commitments, stop breaching international law and put an end to their occupation and colonisation of Palestinian territory in order to reach a viable settlement based on a two-state solution and a just solution of the problem of Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom, unlike those now flooding into Europe, seek only to regain their right to return to their homes from which they were forcibly evicted by the Israeli occupation.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (*United Kingdom*)* – As I do not have any more speakers on the list at present, I thought I would add a few remarks, some of which you may find a little provocative. Perhaps that will lead some speakers to take the floor and continue the debate.

Ms Brasseur referred to the climate of indifference. But there is also complacency and wishful thinking dressed up as assumptions. The issues are not self-solving and all is not for the best in the best of all worlds. Today's challenges need the application of human energy and imagination and, above all, a willingness to think new thoughts and the courage to take initiatives.

Some people have said that Europe's problems are the result of too many holes in its frontiers and that everything will be solved by plugging those holes and that that will come about in due course with the application of sufficient resources. But it does not need much thinking to realise that that would not really help, and that the root causes, desperation and fear of the conflicts would continue to exist and push migrants to Europe or other countries. History and experience confirm that we can be quite sure that refugees and migrants are not going to stop moving desperately in search of solutions. Moreover, migrants and refugees are often much more imaginative than policy-makers or, indeed, academics in finding ways to get over barriers, under walls or round fences. Radical change is clearly required, primarily here in the developed world, in the attitudes which we bring to the issue of problem-solving.

We are all familiar with examples of failed removals, deportations and efforts to prevent people from entering individual countries. There is no effective future in unilateralism. States are required under international law to readmit their nationals, but operationalising that obligation is a two-way matter. Often, the sending countries have little interest in buying into the European efforts to return their citizens, as there is nothing manifestly clear in it for them. Their citizens may have crossed the Sahara or the Mediterranean to go and work successfully in Europe, sending back money regularly to their home countries.

As has been reiterated several times throughout our discussions, we will need to establish effective co-operation in future. It does seem to me that the future of co-operation between European states and other countries lies in equality and equity. Until those factors are brought into the process, we are not going to see a great deal of progress.

A solidarity deficit within the EU has been mentioned. It is a sad reflection on the EU that notwithstanding its treaty incorporation it has so far failed to translate solidarity into fair sharing of responsibilities. But that is essential for two things: it is essential for the future of the EU itself and it is essential at a more practical level as the basis in both its internal and external aspects for short and long-term responses to the crisis of numbers.

There is a crisis. It is manifestly very difficult to get consensus or agreement among the 28 member states of the EU, but perhaps some progress could be made amongst a small group of like-minded states. Perhaps among a few states, the idea of a quota or allocation system might work. Just as Schengen began among the few, so a pilot project could perhaps be undertaken within the EU in which those like-minded states would agree on a single recognised status for refugees within the region of participation, with common rights to movement and employment to be enjoyed within that region. Those states would likewise agree to accept

a substantial number of refugees for distribution and resettlement. At the same time, the EU, perhaps on a broader basis, and this is not new, could establish protection posts in places of need such as in countries of first asylum or in those currently providing refuge for the largest numbers of refugees and migrants.

There is some progressive thinking needed here. Europe has mechanisms for taking action through its directive on temporary protection. It might establish a formal temporary protection status for refugees from conflict, moving away from the case-by-case approach to refugee protection, which so very much a pillar of the common European asylum system but is very resource-intensive and also, in the non-harmonised practice of European states, leads to a lot of difficulties. There is, though, I think something more that can be done beyond Europe and this brings in the other members of the Council of Europe. Europe should take a leadership role. We have been sadly lacking leadership in this area for the last few years. It would be worthwhile holding international conferences like those held in 1979 and 1989 with regard to the Indochina refugee crisis. Such conferences could maybe be held on a rolling basis because, believe you or me, challenges of migration are a generations-long issue ahead of us and are not something that is going to be resolved by a one or two-off commitment of resources. Perhaps such a rolling conference could involve the widest number of stakeholders, namely every state in the world, because no state is untouched by the movements of people today. We have to address the challenges of those movements and ensure that migrants' rights are protected as they should be. One of the deficiencies in the international arrangements today is that we have no agency responsible for protecting the rights of migrants. François Crépeau, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, has pointed out that this is something that we sorely need.

We have heard this again and it must be emphasised time and again: assistance has got to be provided for refugees, and it cannot simply be tied to better border management. On the contrary, it has to contribute to the present and the future well-being of refugees, including through training and education. What is particularly a concern, as emphasised by our colleague from Turkey, is the plight of children who are losing their education and for whom childhood will not return once it has gone.

The EU, the Council of Europe and Europe as a whole perhaps should be even more radical and press for a total restructuring of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Maybe that is an agency which should become responsible not only for the protection of refugees, it is also responsible for the protection of internally displaced persons, perhaps it should be given a mandate, too, with respect to forced migrants, with a mandate to work to find practicable solutions commensurate with human rights and human dignity. Such a restructured agency could perhaps absorb staff from non-UN bodies.

We also need to see a revision of funding because the UNHCR has always been short of funding. There have been suggestions that its budget should be funded regularly rather than, as is now the case, on a voluntary basis from year to year, so that at least a proportion of its funding came from the UN budget, leaving appeals to be made, perhaps, for emergencies.

In addition or alongside the proposals for institutional reforms, maybe we should encourage the UN Secretary General to appoint a special representative for refugee solutions. The aim is to work within the UN system, but at the moment there are still gaps here. Once again, as has been underlined, we must tackle the root causes and do better on mediation and conflict resolution. The Security Council should also take more action to ensure that refugee-producing countries, not migrant-producing countries, but refugee-producing countries, contribute to the costs of humanitarian assistance.

Mr Talip Küçükcan (Turkey)* – I should like to refute the claims that Turkey is supporting IS. That is not true. Doing so would be self-destructive for Turkey. I would remind you that IS attacked the Turkish consulate in Mosul and took over 60 Turkish citizens hostage. So we know what IS stands for. IS was also involved in a terrorist attack in Suruç in southern Turkey which killed more than 20 people and, more recently, in a double terrorist attack in Ankara which left more than 100 dead. Claiming that Turkey has been supporting such an organisation which is also attacking Turkey is inconsistent and illogical. Moreover, Turkey has been asking its European and Western partners to share intelligence about people travelling through Turkey to join IS. For a long time, European countries have failed to provide Turkey with any relevant information.

In 2013, Turkey was the first country to list IS as a terrorist organisation, long before EU countries did so. I think we should keep those things in mind when we look at reports that Turkey is supporting IS. Moreover, Turkey is part of the campaign hitting IS in Syria.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (United Kingdom)* – Yes, these are issues of common security, and we should certainly bear them in mind.

Mr Jarosław Obremski (Poland)* – I should like to tell Mr Voruz that it is not a populist party which is in power in Poland. It is a centre-right party. Of course, we could discuss how that movement will develop in future. I very often hear people talking about Hungary or Viktor Orbán and his party, Fidesz. We should remember that 20% of voters support the Jobbik party, which, in my opinion, is far to the right of Fidesz and closer to Marine Le Pen's party in France or the Freedom Party in Austria. In my view, Fidesz is not really a populist party. Sensitivities seem to differ in Europe. I supported Solidarność and the movement attached to it in the 1980s. It is therefore very strange to accept that sometimes we have members of the Communist Party in power in Europe. That is very strange for me who campaigned in Poland, but it does exist. When you walk through the streets in France, you only see the French flag flown outside parliament. In Poland, in one place, the European flag was replaced with the Polish flag.

Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill (United Kingdom)* – This has certainly been a very stimulating session. I was a little concerned to take on the after-lunch session, often referred to in English as the graveyard session, because it is the one where everyone falls asleep. I nevertheless would like to thank all the panellists and other participants in the debate most warmly.

Conclusions and close by Mr Irakli Chikovani (Georgia, ALDE), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Integration

Mr Irakli Chikovani, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Integration, member of the Georgian parliament* – Although the debate was very interesting, I too, feel the need to take it further. It is clear that we have not achieved everything we wanted. It is not possible to solve the problem in a single meeting, but it is a good starting point.

I would extend my warm thanks to all participants for their contributions and the subsequent discussions, which were very interesting. Everyone played their part. Of course, our thanks also go to the French National Assembly for hosting us here and organising the meeting. We all do realise that this is a very intense and difficult period for the French people, but I think that us being here today is the expression of our solidarity with the French people in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks.

We have reviewed the facts, and the various contributions have given a very clear picture of the way in which each country has addressed the issues in detail. Of course, most of the relevant issues have already been covered, but we realise the need for constant updating.

This morning, after the introduction by Mr Mariani, we heard the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Ms Brasseur, set out in eight very clear steps the requirements for progress with the management of the situation. We all agree with her conclusion that what is needed is "integration, integration and integration". That is the key to resolving the issue.

Mr Attali, who moderated the morning session, underlined that the arrival of migrants should be seen as good news and certainly not as a negative factor. He added that powerful ideological communication is necessary to combat the immediate reactions of rejection and negative views, stressing the need to act. We have also discussed this in private conversations.

It was stressed that populist parties are the biggest challenge facing us. Unfortunately, the situation currently offers fertile ground for their emergence in our countries, and this is a reality which we have to deal with.

We have heard various political stances and also personal experiences, like those of our Polish colleague and of Mr Di Stefano, who urged us to combat corruption, manipulation and arms sales. He recommended that we adopt various measures to provide a broader framework for resolving the problem.

We also heard contributions from countries like Serbia, Sweden and Greece about how the scale of the arrival of refugees has become too large for the transit countries to handle, despite all their efforts. Moreover, our committee held a very interesting discussion yesterday about a fact-finding visit to the island of Kos. One of our colleagues said that migrants now outnumber the island's residents. That shows the grave consequences of migration.

Our partners from other Council of Europe bodies, the Development Bank and the North-South Centre, presented their standpoints and gave details of their contribution on a multilateral basis. The UNHCR

described the realities they are endeavouring to confront. The representatives of the World Food Programme and the UNDP also gave some very interesting information.

From the morning session, it emerged that even though there is no unanimity in our societies about migration, we must acknowledge that migration is inevitable and continual. As Mr Goodwin-Gill said, we cannot just turn migration on or off. It is part of reality and of a continuous process. Therefore, we need to anticipate changes and to work towards the development of our societies in future.

During the afternoon session, we tried to place the issue in its historic context. Mr Guy Goodwin-Gill was a great moderator and provided a lot of information. We are very fortunate to have him with us.

He went back to the end of the Second World War and reminded us of how countries began discussing how to share responsibilities for dealing with population movements triggered by conflict. At the time, it had been said that no nation should have to bear responsibility on its own for migrants or refugees. He stressed that nations had already come together on certain occasions, showing that it is possible to work together to find solutions. However, he regretted the fact that less co-operation has been evident of late. In 2014, for instance, when Italy asked what Europe was going to do, the answer given was very vague. He also mentioned several other similar cases.

We heard from Mr Talip Küçükcan about Turkey's efforts to provide refuge for over 2 million people. In particular, he mentioned the expenditure committed and borne here by the Turkish government. We must express our full respect to Turkey. I can assure Mr Küçükcan that he and his country have my full respect.

Mr Küçükcan added that Turkey is a strong and responsible country. However, it cannot bear the heavy burden alone. We must therefore help it.

Ms Gasal-Vražalica and Mr Di Stefano then took the floor to express their concerns regarding southern and eastern countries. Mr Obremski stressed that the migration crisis was causing a broader threat to European integration, while our Danish colleague tried to address the issue from the angle of long-term requirements and the need for a vision for the future. Perhaps we could offer some solutions to the crisis, but that would demand establishing other mechanisms supported by everybody. The need to tackle the root causes was mentioned several times. The destination countries need to negotiate political solutions, while transit countries and countries of origin need help in ensuring decent humanitarian and security conditions. That would enable them to make greater efforts to offer more attractive living conditions in the countries of origin.

As Mr Goodwin-Gill said, we perhaps skated over, but did not actually neglect, the general security situation, which often lies behind the departure of migrants. In particular, we highlighted the need – and I share this view – to take account of the consequences regarding security in the region if we want to address the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. The world powers therefore need to at least be on the same side. Perhaps they look at the problem differently, but they should at least be on the same side.

I am not sure that we have a clear roadmap for our future policies and action, but we do have many elements which I hope we can fit together in a coherent and differentiated plan for the future.

These few remarks are in no way aimed to be the conclusions of today's work. We will take the time and all the various opportunities to continue our work together at the January session and the meeting in Georgia. We will do everything we can to ensure that the goodwill to step up and intensify co-operation is maintained and increased.

I will now say a few words about follow-up.

A report on the conference will be prepared by the Assembly report writers and should be ready for the committee's meeting in January. You will receive copies.

The committee will decide on the specific follow-up to the conference, which will take the form of a separate report.

That brings me to the end of my modest attempt to sum up our discussions.

I would thank our committee's secretariat for its outstanding work and the interpreters for making our discussions possible.

Thank you for your attention.

APPENDIX / ANNEXE**ATTENDANCE LIST / LISTE DE PRESENCE**

*The names of members who took part in the meeting are printed in bold
Les noms des membres ayant pris part à la réunion sont imprimés en caractères gras*

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Mr Cezar Florin PREDA Romania / Roumanie

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M. Kancho FILIPOV

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Mme Athina KYRIAKIDOU

Ms Ivana DOBEŠOVÁ

Mr Marek CERNOCH

Mr Rasmus NORDQVIST

Mr Eerik-Niiles KROSS

Mr Tom PACKALÉN

M. Philippe BIES

M. Bernard FOURNIER

M. Thierry MARIANI*M. René ROUQUET***Mr Irakli CHIKOVANI****Ms Annette GROTH****Country / Pays**

Albania / Albanie

Andorra / Andorre

Armenia / Arménie

Austria / Autriche

Austria / Autriche

Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan

Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan

Belgium / Belgique

Belgium / Belgique

Bosnia and Herzegovina /

Bosnie-Herzégovine

Bulgaria / Bulgarie

Bulgaria / Bulgarie

Croatia / Croatie

Cyprus / Chypre

Czech Republic /

République tchèque

Czech Republic /
République tchèque

Denmark / Danemark

Estonia / Estonie

Finland / Finlande

France / France

France / France

France / France

France / France

Georgia / Géorgie

Germany / Allemagne

Remplaçants / Alternates

Mme Silvia Eloisa BONET PEROT

Ms Naira KARAPETYAN

Mr Johannes HÜBNER

Ms Alev KORUN

Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV

Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA

Ms Kristien Van VAERENBERGH

Mme Sabien LAHAYE-BATTHEU

ZZ...

Mr Desislav CHUKOLOV

ZZ...

ZZ....

Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES

Mme Daniela FILIPIOVÁ

Mme Gabriela PECKOVÁ

Mr Martin HENRIKSEN

Mr Jaak MADISON

Ms Susanna HUOVINEN

Ms Sylvie GOY-CHAVENT

Mme Marietta KARAMANLI

Mme Nicole DURANTON

M. Denis JACQUAT

Mr Zviad KVATCHANTIRADZE

Ms Luise AMTSBERG

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Mr Josip JURATOVIC	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Gabriela HEINRICH
Mr Bernd SIEBERT	Germany / Allemagne	Mr Volkmar VOGEL
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Ms Liana KANELLI	Greece / Grèce	Mme Antigoni LYMPERAKI
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Ms Katalin CSÖBÖR	Hungary / Hongrie	Mr Jenö MANNINGER
Mr Ögmundur JÓNASSON	Iceland / Islande	Ms Oddný HARÐARDÓTTIR
Ms Olivia MITCHELL	Ireland / Irlande	Mr Jim D'ARCY
Mr Vannino CHITI	Italy / Italie	Mr Francesco VERDUCCI
Mr Manlio DI STEFANO	Italy / Italie	Mr Luis Alberto ORELLANA
Mr Claudio FAZZONE	Italy / Italie	Mr Francesco Maria GIRO
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Mr Joseph FENECH ADAMI	Malta / Malte	Ms Deborah SCHEMBRI
Mr Igor CORMAN	Republic of Moldova / République de Moldova	Ms Valentina BULIGA
Mme Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO	Monaco / Monaco	ZZ...
Ms Marija Maja ČATOVIĆ	Montenegro / Monténégro	Mr Predrag SEKULIĆ
Mr Gidi MARKUSZOWER	Netherlands / Pays-Bas	Ms Marit MAIJ
Ms Tineke STRIK	Netherlands / Pays-Bas	Mr Malik AZMANI
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Mr	NEVILLE	Mark	Head of the Private Office of the PACE President / Chef de Cabinet de la Présidente de l'APCE

PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons / Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées de l'APCE

Ms	NACHILO	Agnieszka	Head of department / Chef de Service
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Ms	NOLLINGER	Agnès	Head of Secretariat / <i>Chef de Secrétariat</i>
Ms	DENU	Penelope	Secretary to the Committee / <i>Secrétaire de la Commission</i>
Ms	KOSTENKO	Olga	Secretary to the Committee / <i>Secrétaire de la Commission</i>
Mr	MILNER	David	Secretary to the Committee / <i>Secrétaire de la Commission</i>
Ms	MOCHEL	Frédérique	Assistant to the Committee / <i>Assistante de la Commission</i>

Parliamentary Project Support Division (PPSD) / Division de soutien de projets parlementaires (DSPP)

Mr	MANCINI	Alessandro	Deputy to the Head of Secretariat / <i>Adjoint au Chef de Secrétariat</i>
Ms	KOPEC	Eliza	Project Assistant / <i>Assistante du projet</i>

PACE Communication Division / Division de la Communication de l'APCE

Mr	FERRER	Francesc	Deputy Head of the PACE Communication Division / <i>Chef Adjoint à la Division de la Communication de l'APCE</i>
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Secretariat of the Council of Europe Development Bank / Secrétariat de la Banque de Développement du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms	PAJARDI	Giusi	Head of the Secretariat of the Partial Agreement on the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) / <i>Chef de Secrétariat de l'Accord Partiel sur la Banque de Développement du Conseil de l'Europe (CEB)</i>
Ms	SCHIMEK	Christiane	Deputy to the Project Coordinator, Secretariat of the Partial Agreement on the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) / <i>Adjointe au Coordinateur Projet Secrétariat de l'Accord Partiel sur la Banque de Développement du Conseil de l'Europe (CEB)</i>

Secretariat of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities / Secrétariat du Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms	CANKOÇAK	Sedef	Secretary to Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe / <i>Secrétaire de la Commission des questions d'actualité du Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe</i>
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