

**Home Sweet Home?**  
**EU Influence on Refugee Integration Policy in Central**  
**Eastern Europe: The Case of Hungary**

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## Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned **Shirlene Afshar Vogl** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revisions.

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## Abstract

This thesis observes the ability of the EU to influence national migration policy by taking a reluctant Member State actor like Hungary and focusing the migration policy area to integration policy in order to analyze the adoption of EU-level principles on integration via ‘soft’ policy transfer mechanisms. While the concept of integration is versatile and congruent with many areas within the domain of public policy, this work will concentrate on integration in respect of recognized refugees in Hungary. In doing so, a comparative study using qualitative research methods will empirically examine the EU’s Common Basic Principles on Integration against the national integration contract scheme for refugees in Hungary and will reveal the reality of EU-Member State policy transfer theories. Previous literature on policy transfer theories and integration concepts along with expert interviews assist in concluding that funding, local civil society and national political will all take part in the ability of the EU to make an impact on national level legislation.

*Keywords: Integration, refugee, EU, Member State, Hungary, policy transfer, integration policy*

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## Introduction

The European Union is one of the most desired destinations for immigration, specifically among forced migrants due to its proximity to the conflict stricken areas of the Middle East and North African. However, the reality of the capacity of European Member States to host, accept and effectively assist in the integration of these individuals as active participants in the receiving society is still uncertain. Europe has experienced a surge in the number of such forced migrants and asylum seekers fleeing instability in order to find refuge in European states. These individuals are migrating by any means possible, even if risking their lives by taking the perilous cross of the Mediterranean Sea which has claimed 1,750 lives as of April 2015 – 30 times more than in the same period in 2014. In a January 2015 press release, Vincent Cochetel, the Director of the Europe Bureau of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, described the situation as “one that can no longer be ignored by European Governments.” Other experts such as, François Crépeau, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, have suggested that the EU and its Member States have had lethargic practices and feeble migration policies and need to agree on a comprehensive plan (The Guardian 2015). With international attention fixed on the EU’s response to the asylum situation, a desire to form a unified EU strategy has evolved in the form of the Commission Strategy on EU Immigration Policy. With Member States divided on the details of such plans it is now on the table for debate making it a formidable opportunity to review the asylum environment at the national level.

Recent statistics have shown that Hungary ranks number five among the other twenty-eight EU Member states in receiving asylum applications with 42,775 applications received in 2014 of which 4,000 resulted in positive decisions granting refugee or subsidiary protection status or are still awaiting decisions. (Eurostat 2015) Given the relatively high number of

applications, low number of positive decisions, and recent EU pressure on Member States to uphold their responsibilities as 1951 Convention signatories, especially Central-Eastern European countries which so far have welcomed fewer refugees. Hungary's immigration climate for asylum seekers and refugees is a strong case to examine. Simultaneously, the local political environment is turning towards harsher and less-welcoming rhetoric towards migrants creating a negative and false image of immigrants including asylum seekers in the media. To the extent that the country's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a leading hardliner on immigration, described the Commission's proposals as mad and pledged to defy the recent Commission Strategy drafted in Brussels. With an increasing plea for assistance among Western EU countries and the possibility of a Common distribution mechanism enforced by the EU Commission, it is important to specifically observe how integration is currently regarded and handled in Central-Eastern European Member States as host societies to third country nationals, in accordance with the EU's Common Basic Principles on Integration. The main question of this research project is how European Union institutions have managed to influence integration policies within a country such as Hungary which has relatively little (recent) experience with large migration inflows. This past decade the EU has made stout efforts to 'mainstream' integration principles in various arenas of EU policy, developing platforms which host and promote the topic of integration. In addition to the eleven Common Basic Principles on Integration which Member States are signatory to, the EU has launched such various platforms including handbooks, forums, and a resourceful website entirely dedicated European integration all with aim to boost robust integration policies at the national-level. (McCarthy 2015 COMPAS Blog).

This research project will begin with a theoretical review of the EU and Member States policy relationship in order to describe how policy influence takes place. As this paper will be taking the specific case of integration of third country nationals into a host society it is also

important to describe and untangle the complex concept of integration before opening the discussion on the policy itself. I will then perform a comparative study on EU integration policy against the national integration schemes of Hungarian state policy and practice, with the aim of identifying any similarities or discrepancies. In comparing such documents, this project will shed light on whether or not EU level policy instruments on integration are transferred into Hungarian level policies and practices via soft policy mechanisms such as the Common Basic Principles on Integration.



## Chapter 1: Current State of Affairs

The significant reason for the call to action of the immigration influx is that the vast numbers of migrants are so-called ‘forced or humanitarian’ migrants, fleeing war-stricken, unbearable, and insecure living conditions in their country of origin. In other words these are people who are seeking refuge in another country because they are unable to find safety in their own homes. According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the centerpiece of international refugee law, a refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Seeing as the majority of European Union Member States are signatories to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, this means that it has adopted the international legal framework concerning the rights of refugees. Apart from defining asylum seekers, the Convention is considered as both a status and rights-based instrument because it is grounded by a number of fundamental principles, most notably non-discrimination, non-penalization, and non-refoulment (no expulsion or returning of a refugee). The European Commission’s office of Migration and Home Affairs openly agrees to this stating, “Asylum is granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country and therefore in need of international protection, making it a fundamental right recognized in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugee to which EU Member States are signatory to.”

In 2014, the number of asylum applications registered in the European Union increased by 191 000 (+44%) to reach a peak of 626 000, of this, the largest national group of asylum seekers were Syrian (Eurostat 2014). The hope for a better life includes desperation for the fundamental human rights the EU stands for such as protection, justice, family reunification,

freedom from political oppression, and equality. With the requirement of adhering to the 1951 Convention and binding EU Treaties, the EU has a responsibility to assist these individuals seeking asylum with effective responses such as sustainable integration systems. Despite the obligation, this responsibility constantly remains a serious point of debate for European politicians at both the national and EU-level. Along with the debate of acceptance of the mass influx of asylum seekers, is a parallel debate concerning the rights and what to do with them once they are recognized refugees. The 1951 Convention stipulates that a refugee's rights in the country of asylum include access to courts, access to work, the provision for documentation, and the freedom of movement. This outline of refugee rights in the Convention lends ideals to the topic of integration which is also often debated within the EU.

As the EU represents the essence of democracy and fundamental rights, it is important that its Member States also stand by these ideals, by tackling the issue with an open approach guaranteeing the protection of human lives through open borders and nurturing integration systems to assist them in rebuilding their lives. On the other hand, right-wing parties are increasingly coming into power among European states such as Hungary, where the leading political party Fidesz headed by Prime Minister Viktor Orban, engages in xenophobic rhetoric and actions causing alarm within the European Parliament. Contrary to the EU's call for openness the current nationalistic approach by the Hungarian government in power suggests that the situation for migrants is at risk of further deterioration. This brings us to examine the migration situation in Hungary and how the EU can pressure a reluctant Member State to accept the Common Agenda on Migration and implement Common European Asylum policies let alone integrate them into the receiving society with opportunities of rebuilding their lives.

### **1.1. Main Hypothesis and Research Question**

The thesis analyzes how and to what extent European Union institutions influence national migration policy in the area of refugee integration. The reason for selecting this area is provided that the legal guidelines for the asylum process are more explicit, it is important to take a particular subject of asylum that is more elusive and dissect it. For that reason, this thesis will focus on the area of integration policy within a given EU Member State. However selecting a case study to examine can be difficult while the treatment of immigrant integration diverges significantly across the European Union (EU), nonetheless Member States increasingly share an acceptance that the expected integration outcomes have thus far failed to materialize (Clewett 2015). With the European Commission setting out an agenda to tackle the challenges of immigration and admitting that there is a need for assessment and reform on current migration legislation and policy framework along with the encroaching reality of a quota system among EU Member States, I select, Hungary, a Central European Member State which has adopted an integration policy in January 2014, as a case study.

This research will take a comparative approach in using integration guidelines at the EU level to that of Hungary by looking at the Hungarian Asylum Act and the Integration Contract System provided by the Hungarian state through the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality. Additionally, I will refer to expert interviews which will provide insight on fundamentals for good integration practices. In 2014 statistics provided by Eurostat showed that, of the 42,775 asylum applications registered in Hungary there were only 840 final decisions on asylum applications and only 40 of these were positive. Based on these statistics and the recent political discourse at the national level, this paper predicts that there will be disparities in expectations and principles outlined at the EU level and what is the reality at the national level,

and expects that evidence will support the finding that EU level instruments on integration into Hungarian level policies and practices is not fully transferred. In order to see whether this is the case it is firstly important to disentangle the complex concept of integration and policy transfer theory among EU and Member States respectively.

## **1.2. Methodologies**

In accordance with the aim of this paper to observe EU influence on Member State policies it is important to understand it in the context of policy transfer theory. Thus, I will review policy transfer theories as described by Lavenex 2002, Stone 2004, Knill 2004. In order to compare integration policy at the EU level against that of the national level, I will use these policy transfer theories to analyze the mechanisms of transfer that occur. Like in the case of the EU and Member States, integration policies are typically formed at the macro level, but practically carried out locally and by different bureaucratic agencies within the state's given social system. Therefore, it is important to track the policy transfer at the national level.

In order to examine this, I have studied policy transfer theory along with integration concepts, discourse, and policies using academic articles, actual policies, and expert interviews relating to integration practices and policy. The semi-structured expert interviews were an instrumental part of conducting the research in order to have a practical understanding of how integration policy is actually formed, find out their views and best practices on the ground, and to understand the role of influential external actors apart from the EU and the state. Although the interviews played a fundamental role in providing me with background on EU refugee and migrant integration for this research project, the main theme will be in taking a qualitative comparative approach at EU versus national policies in order to understand the mechanisms with which ideal integration policy outcomes can be achieved at the national level in the case of a

Central European Country such as Hungary. Prior to acceptance into the EU in 2004, numerous stakeholders and researchers observed the development of EU fundamental values and law transferred into Hungarian policy but since its acceptance there has only been sporadic research, specifically related to migration policy.

The following section will consist of a theoretical review first laying out policy transfer with an emphasis on EU to Member State relationships and then moving on to dissect the concept of integration. This provides for a thorough explanation of the various types of integration and those relevant for the purpose of this study. Next, I will present the principles and policies of integration according to the EU and as adopted by Hungary. Additionally, this section will provide the reader with a contextual background of immigration in Hungary and the political discourse with respect to migrants. After which I will conduct a comparative analysis of the EU's Common Basic Principle of Integration against the Hungarian integration contract program in order to observe the presence of the policy transfer theories previously discussed. Lastly, I will cover mechanisms and incentives of EU influence on a Member State such as Hungary.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Review**

The study of policy influence and the integration of minority groups (respectively) have extensively been covered by academics and experts alike who have taken on these topics, developed concepts which are often referred to and have tested their applicability by conducting case studies. This is particularly true in the case of European nations, where both the study of policy transfer, Europeanization, and integration of minority groups are frequently analyzed. In respect of this research project the definition of Europeanization refers to, “Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies”. (Radaelli 2003, 30)

However, literature that studies the Europeanization of integration policy is limited, and especially when it comes to Central Eastern-European states such as Hungary. This research project will serve to contribute to this topic by discussing how integration policy transfer realistically occurs from the European Union to Hungary. In this section, the thesis will delve into this topic by firstly reviewing literature written on the topic of policy transfer and secondly the concept of integration providing the reader with a fundamental understanding of these two essential concepts as presented by prominent researchers. The section will also further analyze contemporary literature of these topics by identifying conceptual strengths, weaknesses, and potential gaps.

### **2.1. Theoretical Concept of Integration**

The normative definition of integration, according to Merriam-Webster, can be broadly defined as the acceptance or regard as equals of a group of individuals into society. This

definition proves to be problematic and exclusionary seeing as that it does not truly define what ‘acceptance’ or ‘regard or regard as equals actually means, making is subjective. With that said, we can see why the topic of integration can be complex itself. The concept of integration itself has become widely contested in the realm of academia as well as among policy-makers. As such the perception of integration alone is defined in different ways with different outcomes, often times making it difficult to measure the success of integration schemes resulting in competing theories on the best form of integration practices contributing to “the fact that the issues of immigration and integration are formulated in very distinct and context specific ways across Europe.” (Favell 2001, 3) Moreover, the topic of integration itself can be controversial particularly in the case of forced migrants as “it accepts some idea of permanent settlement, and is dealing with, and trying to distinguish, a later stage in a coherent societal process: the consequences of immigration. It is also a term which partly builds its success on swallowing up other similar, but more precise, partial or politically unfashionable terms for the same kind of process: terms such as assimilation, absorption, acculturation, accommodation, incorporation, inclusion, participation, cohesion, enfranchisement, toleration, etc.” (Favell 2001, 3) For this reason, it is important to disentangle and clearly state what is meant when reference is made to integration in this paper.

A comprehensive definition of integration, which we can use in respect of this research project is that which is described by the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) in their handbook titled *The Way Forward: Towards the Integration of Refugees in Europe*, as the dynamic two-way integration process of refugees, placing demands both on receiving societies and on the individuals and communities concerned. ECRE breaks it down as a mutual process of change which is:

a) **Two-way:** placing demands both on receiving societies and on the individuals and communities concerned. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the host society without having to give up one's own cultural identity. This means following the laws of the country of asylum and respecting human rights and its democratic values. With regard to the host society, it requires a willingness to adapt public institutions to changes in the population profile, accept and welcome refugees as part of the national community, and take action to facilitate access to resources and decision-making processes to promote good race relations between all ethnic groups.

b) **Dynamic and long term:** from an individual psychological perspective, integration often starts at the time of arrival in the country of final destination and continues even when a refugee becomes an active member of that society from a legal, social, economic, educational and cultural perspective. It is often the case that the integration process extends beyond the first generation of refugees. For refugees, this means that integration is not just about introduction programmes for newcomers or even for the first generation, but that the inter-generational aspect of integration should be equally emphasized through provision for children of refugees.

c) **Multi-dimensional:** integration relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of the host society as well as to refugees' own perceptions of acceptance by and membership in that society. Such a definition of integration is not an end in itself. Rather it is thought to provide the basis for the development of states' integration policies. The approach to integration that governments choose will determine the outcome of integration efforts and services and will ultimately influence integration for individual refugees. It is therefore vitally important for governments to understand and consciously choose an approach to integration.

(ECRE 2005, 14)

The above definition sets out a comprehensive definition of what integration should consist of, however the challenge with this is that it is a concept which is not widely accepted nor practiced within Member States, let alone CEE Member States which are only getting accustomed to the topic of cultural and racial diversity in this past decade. Although it proves to lay out what ideal EU Member States should incorporate, it needs to bear in mind that each receiving society has different perceptions of immigration affecting how they perceive integration thus further attention



needs made on a cases by case basis in order to begin to creating a welcoming society. Furthermore as mentioned previously assessing the impact of integration initiatives is equally important apart of the entire integration process, this unfortunately is not covered in ECRE's handbook and which it could benefit to create a further comprehensive integration approach.

An article published by the Migration Policy Group, *The Dynamics between Integration Policies and Outcomes: a Synthesis of the Literature* (Bilgili, Huddleston, and Joki 2015) looks into the effects of integration policies by conducting a study on the growing cross-national quantitative literature assessing the impact of individual, contextual, and policy indicators on the integration of migrants. In stressing the importance of analyzing integration policy outcomes, the study recognized that integration policies cannot be generalized and are found in different areas of socio-economic policy settings and therefore broke down the wide-range of policies into four individual and contextual factors, (1) Labor Market Mobility (2) Education (3) Access to Nationality (4) Political Participation, all of which influence the specific outcomes. Although difficult to follow at times, the study provided a useful analysis of the significance of these factors into integration and brought our attention to the significance in causality; do integration policies change outcomes or do outcomes change policies? The answer to which was particularly interesting when taking into account the recent approach of Hungarian integration of migrants which has taken on a 'Western European' model similar to that of France and adopted 'an integration contract' system which has been highly criticized and will be described in further detail in the following section. In sum, the study found that the relationship between integration and outcomes may not be unidirectional but also bidirectional where changes in outcomes may in fact lead to changes in policies.

After reviewing the literature in respect of policy transfer and integration some common themes which was not given enough attention was the political willingness at the national level, the infrastructural capacity at the local level, nor the importance of funding. These practical factors are realistic hurdles which Member State's face and the reason why often time's optimal integration policy transfer cannot occur. This research project will take those indicators into consideration when reviewing the case study of refugee integration in Hungary.

## **2.2. Refugee Policy Transfer among the European Union & Member States**

Policy transfer from the European Union to new Member States has been extensively researched during the past two decades, in the time preceding and coming after EU accession. Especially in the time prior to their induction into the European Union in the late 1990's and early 2000's, where an emphasis on monitoring the progress or regression of potential Member States and the adoption of the 35 different policy fields was important for their accession into the EU. This was typically monitored by taking a comparative analysis of domestic policies against reports, guidelines, and conditions laid out by the European Union for applicant countries wishing to apply for membership. The satisfaction of such conditions, also known as the 'Copenhagen criteria' include a free-market economy, a stable democracy and the rule of law, and the acceptance of all EU legislation. While this is a formal and strict process carried out by EU institutions during which applicant countries are required to progressively align with EU statements and policies up until their acceptance, it is significantly covered by scholars as there are still challenges of the EU enlargement process, including EU to non-Member State policy transfer of the European Acquis.

The following definition helps us to understand the conceptualization process of policy transfer and this can be applicable in respect of EU enlargement goals but is also generally applicable:

“Policy transfer is defined as a ‘processes by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system’. Policy transfer is therefore concerned with processes rather than results. Moreover, it prescribes a development that might, but need not, lead to cross-national policy convergence. Policy transfer is not restricted to merely imitating policies of other countries, but can include profound changes in the content of the exchanged policies”

(Knill 2005: 766)

However, the notion that policy transfer is concerned with the process rather than the results is quite problematic in respect of EU enlargement if one takes into consideration that acceptance into the EU is granted on the condition that full or proven progress towards the direction of full adoption of EU acquis is required if membership is to be granted. Meaning that they are looking at the results of whether or not candidate states are able to adopt EU acquis into their domestic policies. This also holds true for refugee policy but I would add that in respect of refugee integration policy, the EU and states should be concerned with both the process and results of policy transfer. The point to be made in respect of mentioning EU enlargement thoughts in this thesis is that if the intention of policy copying was not established properly early on leading to ineffective policy transfer of which the affects can be witnessed today.

For Central and Eastern European Member States such as Hungary, at the time of its candidacy it took up the initiative to become a part of the international refugee regime in 1989 as a signatory to the Geneva Convention as well as other relevant international treaties, in doing so they were on the path to implementation of an EU acquis communautaire in respect of asylum and immigration as it was defined as a condition for accession. This suggests that the path to adopting

similar asylum policies to western EU states was rapidly induced by the apparent desire to become an EU Member State. Lavenex argues (2002) that the dynamics of policy transfer in this case can be detrimental in the long run when a candidate state is eager to adopt policies without the required infrastructure in place at the local level while also criticizing the lack of an explicit definition within the *acquis* of a comprehensive refugee policy. This is important to bear in mind, as she warns that the realization of such provisions confronts CEE countries with a ‘moving target’, posing the problem of keeping up with development in EU refugee policy. In respect of the EU policy transfer system she also suggests that this is a multi-level system provided this unique environment it can occur due to the interaction between domestic structures and European regulations, however it is fragmented in nature and can be complicated by the participation of multiple actors, supranational and governmental or non-governmental in competition to transfer policy. In that regard, who the agent of policy transfer is- the governments of individual Member States or the European Commission – will have an impact on the contents of policies transferred. (Lavenex 2002: 704) It needs to be taken into consideration that this assessment was published before Hungary was a Member State but this can still be used in the context of current-day Hungarian asylum policy.

Furthermore she also discusses a very important concept of different modes of policy transfer in the context of the EU enlargement process but mentions that they are not only subject to that period in time, meaning that policy transfer is a continuing process. These modes are policy diffusion, policy convergence, policy learning, lesson drawing, and copying. Lavenex goes on to further distinguish policy transfer into two types which are voluntary and involuntary stating that policy transfer can occur in a coercive form of policy transfer through direct imposition or conditionality based on pressure to adopt policies despite the fact they may not fit

their domestic interests but would still better position themselves to qualify for EU membership. In reviewing the ideas and issues that Laverenx established in respect of refugee policy transfer of EU to candidate CEE states was quite accurate and still holds to be true today, almost 13 years later. Although she describes Hungary as one of the exemplary CEE countries of policy adaption and the process of policy transfer, she does not make any observations in respect of policy implementation and outcomes which would have been meaningful to address as a crucial component of the policy transfer process. In a separate piece by Virginie Guiraudon touches on the topic of policy outcomes and implementation in respect of European Integration and migration policy stating that internationalization controls allow for better migration policy venues, where political actors are less encumbered than in national settings where a number of institutions can be veto points and prevent reforms, allowing them to (1) avoid judicial constraints, (2) eliminate adversaries, (3) enlist much needed co-operating parties. So that, when we apply migration policy an EU Member State would benefit at achieving policy outcomes than a non EU Member State due to the international responsibilities and other supranational institutions in place such as the European Court of Justice diminishing the role of national courts at the policy implementation level. Although true and a very important factor, the bureaucracy in taking up a court case up to the ECJ is still procedurally dependent on the outcome of the hearing at the national level. Further contradicting her previous statement of EU institutions, it must not be forgotten that the implementation of rules governing immigration and asylum remain intergovernmental in the sense that the implementers are Member States and the Commission can only play a 'watch dog' role which is the hazard of the EU- Member State relationship. These pieces proved relevant to observe that when applied the policy transfer concept in the context of asylum policy although supposedly adopted in Hungary, still proves to face the same challenges

of the lack of policy congruence without reliance on the state to deliver the outcomes. This will be later discussed in further detail when the case of Hungary is further examined.

Another important academic piece in respect of policy transfer is by Stone 2004 where she emphasizes the influential role of international organizations and other non-state actors with their ability to inspire national legislation through ‘soft’ forms of transfer by the spread of norms and knowledge, but only effective if complimented by so-called ‘hard’ transfer policy tools. Stone also raises the topic of policy adoption in respect of diffusion, which tends to neglect the political dynamic or the socio-historical make-up of a polity involved in policy transfer. These raise central thoughts on policy transfer in regards to the significance of external actors, the carrying out of policy practices, and the recognition/consideration of the political environment otherwise there is an eminent risk of ‘copying-out’ of the model policies transforming into empty principles of the intended target.

### **Chapter 3: The European Union & Hungary: Integration Discourse & Policies**

“How successfully members of migrant populations are integrating into European societies continues to be an important question in Europe, due in part to concerns to improve social cohesion and security.” (ECRE 2004) In that regard, now the question of who remains responsible in igniting and sustaining integration interventions needs to also be addressed as this is a frequent debate. As previously drawn out in the literature review, the concept of integration involves different aspects of inclusion seeking to involve the lesser represented migrant groups socially, economically, and politically. Although all individuals have the inherent right of human dignity, anti-asylum rhetoric and the accompanying rise in hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees has increased the focus on the integration of refugees specifically. (ECRE 2005:5) For this reason and the fact that integration needs are specific for various minority groups, this thesis chooses to focus on integration initiatives that is aimed to assist recognized refugee populations. In this portion of the thesis the reader will be provided with the explanation of the role of the European Union in respect of integration principles subscribed at the EU-level which is meant to act as guiding instruments for Member States’ policies concerning integration. However, due to the multifaceted nature of integration the branding of one direct integration policy is unrealistic. At the national level there can be a given approach to integration, but it is rather more appropriate to say that there are various public policies which can call under the umbrella of integration as we will see in the case of Hungary. Moreover one of the challenges of integration policy study is the fact that there are no primary laws which can be set as “the international law” or ‘a treaty’ on integration, rather there are so-called secondary laws such as normative acts in the form of regulations, principles, or directives. This difference plays a crucial role in the non-binding nature

of EU integration principles which has been formulated for Member States to follow, this topic will be expanded upon in the coming section on EU Principles on Integration.

### **3.1. EU Principles on Integration**

Before examining the European Union Common Basic Principle on Integration it is first important to understand the legal instruments of the EU which consists of primary law, secondary law and supplementary law. In short, primary laws are binding Treaties, secondary laws are legal instruments such as conventions and agreements, and supplementary laws are additional elements drawn from case laws not originally and explicitly stated in Treaties. (Europa EU Website, Sources of European Union Law) Where refugee matters are concerned, relevant legal instruments are not limited to only one of these categories which draws on further complications in untangling and providing guidance for Member States with which they are able to work with and refer to. Additionally, where immigrant integration is concerned this is not simpler as the basis of the comprehensive policy instruments comes in the form of the EU's official suggested actions to make integration work in Member States which is laid out in the "Common Basic Principles of Immigrant Integration".

The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and form the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration. The purpose of this piece was to develop a set of EU common basic principles in directing due awareness of Member States to recognize integration as a critical component of immigration and understand the benefits of the two-way process of integration. As outlined in the Council of the European Union Justice and Home Affairs' press release the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy was established with the aim to serve as a basis for and assist Member States in formulating integration policies by offering them a simple non-binding but thoughtful guide of basic principles against which they



can judge and assess their own efforts. Furthermore, it is also meant to assist the Council to reflect upon and agree on EU-level mechanisms and policies needed to support national and local-level integration policy efforts, particularly through EU-wide learning and knowledge-sharing. (Council of European Union 2004, 15-18)

Based on the aims of this document, it is apparent that this is meant to be a tool for Member States to refer to given the fact that it is a non-binding policy. A presumption could be made that provided the complex and intertwined nature of integration concepts it is difficult to have Member States to agree and accept one overarching primary law was not possible to achieve. Thus the idea of providing a framework with which they could refer to and further promotional instruments such as a set of recourses including documents, statistics, funding, and a forum of civil society organizations was set forward in order to encourage dialogue and active participation of Member States with these guiding tools. With that said, it is now important to see how such ‘soft policies’ (Stone 2004) have been transposed at the national level of a Member State.

### **3.2. Hungary: Country Background and Context**

Hungary is by no means a newcomer to migration trends due to the country’s history of special geographic characteristics of having fluid borders. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward Hungary has experienced migratory movement with immigration inflows like those of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for instance, as a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire to emigration outflows following the revolution in 1956. The four decades that followed under the communist government, saw limited movement up until the fall of Communism in 1989. With the end of communism Hungary underwent momentous political and social transformations, including the development of legal frameworks for regulating migration. This consisted of the establishment of various immigration regulation acts as well as Hungary becoming a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention.

However, it wasn't until March 1998 that a complimentary national policy was adopted, taking the form of the Act on Asylum. Up until 1998 Hungary only accepted refugees from European countries. As Hungary acceded to the Refugee Convention and the Protocol in 1989, the attempt to sustain a geographical limitation upon accession to the Protocol was therefore legally invalid. (Hathaway 2005: 98) Shortly after, Hungary received a wave of asylum applicants in large part due to the Kosovo crisis at the time, since then Hungary has not received significant numbers of asylum applications up until the recent decade.

From 2010, European Union states have experienced a rising increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving at their shores and borders with some countries having seen sharper increases than others, mainly due to geographic positioning. Hungary is among those countries having experienced a substantial increase of asylum claims in the past two years. According to the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality in 2012 there were 2,157 registered asylum claims, 18,900 in 2013, and 42,777<sup>1</sup> in 2014, and from 1 January till 1 March 2015, Hungary registered 28,535 asylum claims making the Hungarian-Serbian border the third largest entry point into the EU. (Frontex 2014) Despite the increase, approximately 80% of asylum-seekers abscond and leave Hungary within less than 10 days after the submission of their asylum claim. According to the Migration Policy Institute in an article published in 2003, the labeling of Hungary, as a 'transit' country for asylum seekers is a result of the economic disparity, a weakened asylum system and scarce opportunities for integration (Juhasz 2003) It is also worth

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<sup>1</sup> With a total of 21 453 asylum claims in 2014 and 22 975 in January-February 2015, nationals of Kosovo were the largest group among asylum-seekers. However, not one person from Kosovo received refugee status or subsidiary protection in Hungary in this period. More recently, the number of Kosovars seeking asylum in Hungary has dropped significantly in the last week of February. Afghan citizens continue to be the second largest group (2014: 8 796; Jan-Feb 2015: 2 631). The third largest group, Syrian asylum-seekers continue to arrive in rising numbers now for several months (2014: 6 857; Jan-Feb 2015: 1 226). An increasing number of Iraqi citizens have sought asylum in Hungary, too (2014: 496; Jan-Feb 2015: 382). Palestinian, Sudanese, Eritrean, Somali and Iranian asylum-seekers also arrive in important numbers.

mentioning that over a decade later the Hungarian government still portrays itself as a ‘transit country’ and as proven by statistics where refugees are still leaving despite developments of an integration scheme suggesting that the adopted integration scheme remains to be insufficient. The asylum regime in Hungary has come under much scrutiny by the international community and key players in asylum protection such as UNHCR, IOM, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, and local NGOs such as Minedek and Migszol, scrutinizing the questionable detention procedures, unseemly conditions of facilitates, and more recently the unwelcoming nationalist political rhetoric.

In addition to the weak asylum system, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán backed by the ruling political party Fidesz has outwardly spoken out against immigration with statements such as, “immigration only brings pain and threat to the people of Europe; therefore, immigration must be stopped...this is the Hungarian position” (Hirado.hu, 2015); "We Hungarians like to speak frankly", said Mr Orbán. "Therefore we say that we want Europe to stay European, and we would like to preserve Hungary for Hungarians". He added that he found the Commission’s proposals (referring to a Common European Asylum System) "absurd, almost crazy". (European Parliament Press Release 19-May-2015). In making such strong stances and claiming to take this as the Hungarian view on immigration, the government further attempted to legitimize their comments by conducting a national consultation framing immigrants and asylum seekers as *terrorist* and *economic* migrants with questions in the consultation as (Prime Minister’s Office 2015):

3] There are some who think that mismanagement of the immigration question by Brussels may have something to do with increased *terrorism*. Do you agree with this view?

I fully agree    I tend to agree    I do not agree

4] Did you know that *economic migrants cross the Hungarian border illegally*, and that recently the number of immigrants in Hungary has increased twentyfold?

Yes

I have heard about it

I did not know

In 2014, the majority of recognized refugees in Hungary are from Syria and Iraq where war against terrorist groups is being fought and it is no secret that they often arrived in the country by means of illegal border crossing; thus suggesting that refugees can be grouped in the same category as terrorist and economic migrants. With the Hungarian government being outwardly against immigration and the proposal of a Common European Asylum Policy and a quota system it raises the question of what support does the current national asylum system then offer the few recognized refugees that stay.

### **3.3. National Integration Policies**

Once granted refugee status, these individuals are able to stay within Hungary upon signing an integration contract offered by the Hungarian social welfare system. In 2013, the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) called upon civil society actors and international organizations active in refugee integration to participate in a consultative meeting about a new integration scheme for refugees and people with subsidiary protection. At the time, the scheme's framework was already set by amendments of the Asylum Act that was later put into force as of 1st January 2014, and a Government Decree which set out its practical details (Migration Policy Institute 2013). Prior to its introduction in Hungary, this scheme known as an 'integration contract' model had already been in practice in Poland and previously used in France.

Once a recognized refugee, the person is permitted to stay in reception centers/camps for two months (as opposed to the previous six). During these two months they are strongly

encouraged to sign an “integration contract” with the OIN, which entitles them to “receive 90.000 HUF/person for six months, and then 22,500 less every six months for a total of two years. Families can only get maximum 215.000 HUF/month. Some refugees will be provided with accommodation after the two months in by the Reformed Church and the Baptist Church, but the majority of the refugees will have to find their own accommodation and their social workers will be family caretakers (családgondozó) in the local family support services that are located in the municipalities in cities. Unfortunately in the municipalities, family caretakers and social workers have not been trained on how to help refugees.” (Migszol 2014) With the financial assistance they are provided with they are supposed to be able to cover housing, Hungarian courses, and education. Migszol has identified some areas of concern in respect of the integration contract in that the amount which refugees are provided is still not ample enough for the basic costs of living and costs for Hungarian language courses or healthcare, and the fact that the state decreases the monthly support money also even in respect of family support (családi pótlék) is discriminating. Social welfare in Hungary, states that Hungarian citizens are entitled to receive financial support and they do not lose the amount of the family support over a period of time as the integration contract does. Although it could be seen as an improvement in comparison to how integration was previously handled in Hungary, civil society actors still are concerned with the details of the contracts as well as its sustainability.

In sum, on one hand the European Union’s has set out a comprehensive set of Common Basic Principles for Integration which is at the disposal of Member States to incorporate into their national policies. However, on the other the non-binding nature of the principles does not seem to initiate the aims which the EU intends when reviewing the integration program within Hungary. With the reliance on Member States to transpose such principles, there is a threat of this

not happening particularly in environments where political will to do so is lacking. The following section will dig deeper into this assumption by conducting a comparative analysis of the EU's CBPI's against the Hungarian Integration Contract Program.

## Chapter 4: Comparative Analysis of EU and Member State Integration Policy

Prior to the establishment of the Common Basic Principles on Integration Policy, the EU's Founding Treaties originally did not pledge to integration explicitly but referred to Articles 13 and 73k of the Treaty of Amsterdam:

Article 13 which enables the Council to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Article 73k, requests the Council to adopt measures on immigration policy regarding, among others, "conditions of entry and residence, and standards on procedures for the issue by Member States of long term visas and residence permits, including those for the purpose of family reunion". The Council is also requested to adopt "measures defining the rights and conditions under which nationals of third countries who are legally resident in a Member State may reside in other Member States.

Although these were and remain legally binding instruments, there was still a need to foster and truly advocate for promotion of integration. Hence the European Union set forth the development of integration within the European Context in 2004 which resulted in the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU. This is meant to be a foundation for national integration policies of Member States. In order to observe how a Member States actually insert the Common Basic Principles of Integration (CBPI) I will conduct a comparative analysis of the CBPI's against the Hungarian Integration Contract for Refugees and Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection. In doing so, I will examine where I find the CBPI's present and indicate those with a positive mark and where they are absent indicate them with a negative mark. This will serve as a test for my research question of how an EU policy instrument is able to influence integration policy at the national level. Then, I will tally up the total number of positives and negatives observed in order to identify the greater number of the two, with which will provide an understanding of whether or not integration policies are transferred from the EU to the national level.

The national integration policy used for this test is pulled from the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationality's website in the form of the Information on Integration Contract for Refugees and Beneficiaries of Subsidiary protection. The legitimacy of the state's use of administering individualized integration contracts derives from the Hungarian Act LXXX of

2007 on Asylum and Government Decree n. 301/2007 (XI.9.) on its implementation, as of January 1, 2014 which states that “a person recognized by the refugee authority as refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection may enter into an integration contract with the refugee authority.” The integration contract is an official binding contract between the client holding a refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection status and the refugee authority. Once the refugee applies and is accepted to take part in the integration contract scheme they are then paired with a family support service officer, who assists them in their social service needs who in agreement with the client draws up the unique integration contract which documents what the allocated financial subsidies will go towards, based on the particular needs of the refugee for example, housing, Hungarian language classes, sustenance, ect. Along with the contract, should the refugee possess they should attach other relevant documents such as a financial declaration, language certifications, or academic and professional qualifications. Entire families are also able to apply for this contract. Upon execution of drawing up the contract, the family support service will draft a mentoring plan the client is obligated to cooperate in order to perform the obligations and to fulfill the goals defined in the mentoring plan. The unique and personalized manner of each contract makes it difficult to have a normative example to use for this analysis, however using the basis of what every recognized refugee should be entitled to when using the OIN’s services serves as a good frame of reference for what each contract should entail. As mentioned previously in order to evaluate whether or not the EU’s CBPI’s are transferred into the Hungarian Integration Contract model. The breakdown of the analysis is as follows:



<b>EU Common Basic Principle on Integration</b>	<b>Hungarian Integration Contract</b>	<b>Plus or Minus</b>
<b>CBPI 1</b> 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States'	"a person recognized by the refugee authority as refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection may enter into an integration contract with the refugee authority."	- It is evident from the nature of the binding contract with expectations on both ends in a client-service oriented frame. However, the contract is an unbalanced; there is more of an emphasis on what is required of the client (refugee) that there is a two-way process present.
<b>CBPI 2</b> 'Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union'		- There is neither mention of basic values of the EU nor human rights.
<b>CBPI 3</b> 'Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible'	The family support service may assist in finding employment.	+ There is a presence of employment searching which suggests occupational assistance through the state's employment office.
<b>CBPI 4</b> 'Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration'	The family support service may assist in enrolling in kindergarten or school, or finding Hungarian language learning opportunities.	- Recognized refugees are paired up with a family services support officer but there is neither explicit mention of historical nor institutional guidance, and they may assist with securing education or language courses but not obliged to do so.
<b>CBPI 5</b> 'Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active	The family support service may assist in enrolling in kindergarten or school, or finding Hungarian	- The website states only that the family support service officer may support the

participants in society'	language learning opportunities.	refugee with education but this dependent on the type of integration contract the refugee draws up. It is not a requirement for them to choose their subsidies to go towards education or development.
<b>CBPI 6</b> 'Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no explicit mention of equal access similar to that of national citizens in a non-discriminatory manner.</li> </ul>
<b>CBPI 7</b> 'Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens'	Community building and conflict management programs and services for family strengthening, supportive services for overwhelmed families. Family mentoring and community development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of Community building and community development is linked to family mentoring and strengthening respectively</li> </ul>
<b>CBPI 8</b> 'The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law'	It may assist in contacting non-governmental or municipality organizations, employment center and, if needed, churches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No evidence of practice of diverse culture or religion. There is only mention of the possibility of the family support service of putting the refugee in contact with a church for further support. However, if we take the normative definition of "church" as listed on the website</li> </ul>

		Dictionary.com it is a building for public Christian worship” the assumption could be made that the connection will not be made for religious worship reasons as the cumulative majority of asylum applicants are coming from Islamic states.
<b>CBPI 9</b> ‘The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration’		- No evidence of political participation or of introduction to the political environment/process within Hungary.
<b>CBPI 10</b> ‘Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.’		- No evidence of mainstreaming between other national social services offices.
<b>CBPI 11</b> ‘Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.’	Promotion of the social inclusion incorporated into the integration contract on the basis of the mentoring plan	+ There is mention of a mentoring plan with goals but is subjective to what is laid out in the actual individualized integration contract of the client.

Upon reviewing the above analysis there are a total of 3 of the 11 CBPIs that can be detected among the Hungarian integration contract scheme which indicates that there is very little congruence between the two policy instruments. In relating this case to the context of policy transfer I conclude that there has been an unsuccessful attempt to transfer EU soft policy

tools into the Member State's national policy. Based on the previous theoretical review concerning policy transfer theories, the lack of policy transfer can be attributed to 1) the involuntary/coercive manner as described by Lavenex in which Hungary was pressured to adapt and conform to EU policy standard without having the proper internal infrastructure; 2) Hungarian authorities were only concerned with adopting a policy and process as described by Knill, which looked good on paper but yields feeble results not attaining the desired outcome according to the CBPI; 3) Stone's emphasis on the polity being prepared to accept the subject of policy transfer is clearly not the case in refugee integration in Hungary, thus making a soft policy tool such as CBPI insufficient without a 'hard' (legally binding) policy to back it. Another important lesson to draw from this analysis in respect of the theoretical review on integration as described by ECRE, is the lack of a mutual process of integration. The Hungarian integration contract scheme emphasizes a list of deliverables for the beneficiary to fulfill in a restricted timeframe while there are not concrete obligations which the service provider (the family support services) needs to strictly uphold. Furthermore, there are no obligations of a long-term, multi-dimensional solution to achieve social or political inclusion into the host society.

Although the comparative analysis could have benefited from further empirical data on what an actual integration contract consists of, which would also support this research in verifying this analysis. However, after unsuccessfully contacting a local NGO, it is possible that the legal and personal manner of the integration contracts does not allow it to be shared with outsiders. Additionally with the restrictive time frame of this project it was not possible to conduct further field research first-hand. The possibility for further research on the ground with family support service officers and refugees who have participated in this scheme, would allow

for a deeper observation in order to understand the dynamics and reality of the integration entitlements and services provided by the Hungarian Office of Immigration and Nationalities to see if there is an alignment with this comparative assessment.

## **Chapter 5: Mechanisms & Incentives of EU Influence with National Competency**

Political and philosophical approaches to the integration of immigrants and their descendants vary across EU countries based on the state's experience or lack thereof of inflows and presence of migrant communities. Nonetheless the EU continues to promote the effective integration of non-EU nationals through soft mechanisms involving good practice examples, creation of research networks, and the occasional ministerial conference. (McCarthy 2015) Provided the non-binding nature of such soft mechanisms coupled with the multifaceted features of integration when realized into policies, effective integration remains up to competencies at the national level, and based on the empirical analysis of Hungary, it is evident that some Member States have yet to fully incorporate and develop fundamental integration principles according to the EU. With that said, it leaves us with the question of how can the EU influence and incentivize Member States on implementing effective integration policies? When attempting to answer this question the importance of local competence also needs to be taken into consideration. This section will review hard tangible mechanisms, such as funding incentives, where the EU tries to influence national integration policy through funding, the competency of the Hungarian state as described by political will, and the balance where the state can meet the EU regarding integration policy mainstreaming. Drawing knowledge from two expert interviews conducted in Brussels between May 4-6th, 2015 will contribute to the final portion of this thesis.

### **5.1. EU Funding as a Stimulant**

On its website, the European Commission recognizes that “adequate, flexible and coherent financial resources are essential for strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice and for developing the common Union policy on asylum and immigration based on solidarity between EU States and towards non-EU countries. In order to promote the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a

common Union approach to asylum and immigration, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) has been set up for the period 2014-20, with a total of EUR 3.1 billion for the seven years.” (Europa, European Commission Website, EU Actions to Make Integration Work) As of March 25, 2015 the Commission approved funding for 22 national programs, of which 17 were AMIF programs in respect of asylum, migration, and integration in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

The AMIF allocated 24,113,477 Euro to Hungary in addition to the previous emergency assistance of 1.251.687,38 Euro the state received in 2014 for the purpose of capacity-building of asylum reception and human resources aiming to respond effectively to migration pressure in Hungary. (Award Decision AMIF 2014) I encountered a concrete example of this funding while conducting research on the website of the Hungarian Office of Immigrants and Nationality where a disclaimer appeared stating that “The website was created with the support of the European Union, co-financed by the European Integration Fund.” This example, also proved that in the spirit of transparency and transmission of the effective migration support developments the AMIF has stringent regulations on the implementation and monitoring of projects and programs carried out with AMIF funding. Thus requiring the awarded national programs is required to comply with these regulations along with remaining devoted to the goals which the submitted funding application originally is meant to serve. If they do not comply, they will lose the funding awarded.

However, “essentially it is still Member States who decide both the national priorities for each fund and the mechanisms for allocating it, research has indicated in certain cases these guidelines and priorities can induce a new focus on policies targeting particular groups such as

migrants.” (McCarthy 2015). As Anne Bathily has pointed out during an interview, “such priorities have to be defined on a multi-annual basis through negotiations at the national level and in relationship with the European Commission’s priorities where the state does not put sustainable funding in integration initiatives as it is project based funding making it impossible to build up real practices, real services that can make an impact.” (Bathily 2015) Making an important critique, while funding is important the longevity of projects when funding is limited will indeed be limited and have a lesser impact in comparison to a program that has the opportunity to become well-established over time and can be incorporated into all levels of social work and services. Thomas Huddleston of the Migration Policy Group also confirmed this and brought up the significance of the political climate in saying that, “Often times you will see integration strategies that never really led anywhere and were just created as a framework for how to spend EU money and would spend it by providing it to NGOs to carry out the work of what the state directs them to do or what they deem appropriate but in a limited basis to comply with political standard and where often times funding is interrupted.” In confirmation of this statement, we see this in the case of Hungary’s recent award for emergency assistance where funding went towards building up the capacity building and human resources at reception centers, which can be interpreted as funding to hire more social workers. Where on the other hand you see states like Italy for instance who put the money directly towards the crisis in assisting refugees directly in the same emergency grant by prioritizing the funding to go towards consolidating reception centers instead. In conclusion, although the use of funding can be a useful mechanism to incentivize policy change, we need to take into consideration the real impact these project based funds can have along with the fact that the priorities for funding are still guided by the Member State where there is still room to influence its own political agenda.



## **5.2. The Politics of Integration**

Another important factor which consistently arose when conducting research interviews was the political willingness at the national level to initiate sustainable integration systems. With the leading political party headlining a national campaign against immigrants the political atmosphere in Hungary is not welcoming towards common policies nor placing efforts on the political agenda in favor of migrants. Previously, countries such as Hungary “have done something on refugee integration because either EU accession or UN convention required them to, in the form of ‘copying-out’ where they implement EU law into domestic law and pass it through their parliament because they had to show the EU they had to.” (Huddleston 2015) This was the attitude prior to EU accession which was a very different political environment. Now we see with a rightist government in Hungary outwardly pledging to defy the European Union and seeking legitimacy for their anti-immigrant rhetoric through deceiving consultations and propaganda in the form of tasteless xenophobic billboards stating “If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture!” and “If you come to Hungary you mustn’t take work away from the Hungarians!” RTL Klub reports this campaign will cost Hungarian taxpayers around HUF 300 million (USD 1.2 million). This is on top of the HUF 950 million (USD 3.5 million) spent printing and posting some 8 million questionnaires to Hungarian citizens.” (Budapest Beacon 2015) Circling back to the topic on funding, if the government were to in turn direct their money towards capacity building and human resources of reception centers the AMIF funding which they applied for could go towards the much needed facility development of the insufficient and poor reception centers.

## **5.3. What’s Next? Rethinking EU Integration Policies**

As mentioned previously the reality of a common EU approach towards Asylum policy seems to be coming fairly close with the need to respond to the crisis of major influxes of

asylum seekers. But what can be done in order to insure that there are sustainable solutions absorbed by reluctant Member State's such as Hungary? Firstly, the idea that integration is an important part of a sustainable solution needs to be incorporated into this common EU approach because as ECRE has often mentioned, "Integration begins at day one of the asylum procedure" (Bathily, Interview 2015). And without a strong integration initiative taken into consideration the other key aspects of the proposed policy such as the quota system will not work, because refugees will continue to feel disregarded in some Member States and move on to other states where host societies are more welcoming and accepting of cultural diversity. Secondly, the EU can seek synergies between integration and other areas of policy. For instance, "the relevance of integration to the migration and development agenda raises the possibility of funds for international cooperation and development can increase the reach of those resources earmarked for integration." (Clewett March 2015) And lastly, the EU provide more support to civil-society organizations and projects directly because often times they are better able to respond to the needs of refugees and have the will to do so, diminishing the politics of integration factor. This can be witnessed in the case of Hungary with a number of civil society actors, such as Migszol and Minedek attempting to partake in the asylum practices and actively engage in asylum discourse. Although integration contracts have been adopted in Hungary, they are more a form of formality and less a tool of the government trying engage with the new-comers into their society. However, this could potentially change with the help of grassroots campaigns and lesson learning projects offered by external actors such as local NGOs and expert international organizations such as the UNHCR. Without this element the integration contract serves as an empty, copied policy instrument apart of the state's national Asylum Act.

## Conclusion

Achieving harmonization between European Union principles and national legislation within Member States in respect of migration policy is challenging. As mass influxes of forced migrants continue to reach Europe's borders in 2015, efforts to prepare a holistic asylum policy is increasingly becoming an urgent priority for the European Union yet Member States remain divided on formulating policy responses. In light of this, there is pressure on Member States to fulfill and absorb existing EU standards on asylum protection procedures sustainably and effectively. The Hungarian-Serbian border remains the main land crossing section for most migrants to seek illegal entry into the EU. As a result of its geographic positioning coupled with humanitarian crises continuously escalating, Hungary is receiving a high number of asylum applications and needs to be prepared to effectively host these refugees. As this study proved the integration contract scheme is not a two-way, long-term, multi-dimensional policy tool for achieving societal inclusion of refugees in Hungary according to the mutual process of integration. This is in part due to the fact that the intended policy transfer or influence of the European Union is not effective in driving Member States to adopt such 'soft' policy tools as the Common Basic Principles for Integration Policy which this research project had intended to examine. While moving Member State's in the direction of adopting 'hard' policy tools is not in the foreseeable future, the EU can reiterate good 'soft' policies such as the CBPI coupled with external mechanisms such as funding, emphasis on the involvement of civil society at the national level, and condemning such nationalistic political discourse to influence effective and nurturing integration systems.

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