HOW IMMIGRATION IS MANAGED IN WESTERN EUROPE. BETWEEN HARSH MODELS AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS. THE CASE OF ALBANIA AS A SENDING AND RECEIVING COUNTRY FOR IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract: *The reports of international institutions rank Albania among the Western Balkan countries with high emigration, especially in countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Italy, etc. These countries are applying different management models to deal with immigration. Thus, alongside the framework of Germany's integration policies, such as the recently adopted Immigration Law, countries such as Great Britain have chosen models to reduce the effects of this phenomenon. Meanwhile, Italy is trying to offer another model of immigration management, reaching an agreement with Albania. This step turns Albania from a country that produces immigration to a country that will receive thousands of immigrants. This agreement is the first between an EU member and nonmember state, such as Albania. The goal is to create a model where the addition of reception camps for immigrants outside the borders of the EU will facilitate the management of this phenomenon. This paper specifically aims to bring and analyze the German, British, and Italian, as approaches that have given different results regarding the integration or exclusion of immigrants from their societies. In this paper, the hypothesis is that mismanagement and neglect of compliance with laws and ethical principles harm the integration of immigrants into Western societies. The paper will explore how the success or failure of the reforms undertaken relates to immigration trends. Part of this paper will be the impact of the historical, social, and cultural factors We will use the qualitative method, comparing the historical, social, and cultural factors, and the quantitative method, measuring the support or not of public opinion in Albania, mainly of well-educated young people. Which of the models can be considered closer to the principles of international law how visionary are these policies of the host countries? Will the case of Albania be the best example of the awareness of Europeans that the EU cannot manage the waves of immigration alone*

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and change the legal framework of the EU function of new approaches? We will be able to answer these questions by taking a historical and current look at the waves of Albanian immigration and the challenges of integration into the societies of Western countries.

Keywords: *migration; EU policy; integration; standards*

1. Introduction

The reports of international institutions rank Albania among the Western Balkan countries with high emigration, especially in countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Italy, etc. These countries are applying different management models to deal with immigration. Thus, alongside the framework of Germany's integration policies, such as the recently adopted Immigration Law, countries such as Great Britain have chosen models to reduce the effects of this phenomenon. Meanwhile, Italy is trying to offer another model of immigration management, agreeing with Albania. This step turns Albania from a country that produces immigration into a country that will receive thousands of immigrants. This agreement is the first between an EU member and a nonmember state, such as Albania. The goal is to create a model where the addition of reception camps for immigrants outside the borders of the EU will facilitate the management of this phenomenon.

Studies define a hard ethical policy dilemma as involving a conflict between morally worthy goals that need to be addressed but cannot be resolved through policy responses. We try to identify and analyze the characteristics, variations, and causes of migration and citizenship policy dilemmas and to explore possible responses. According to Eurostat (Migration and asylum in Europe, 2023 edition), between January and November 2023, Frontex registered 354,713 irregular crossings at the external borders of the EU. This corresponded to an increase of 21.6% compared to the first 11 months of 2022 and an increase of 108.9% compared to the January to November period in 2021. In line with previous trends, detections continued to concentrate on the Central Mediterranean Route and the Western Balkans Route. Taken together, these two routes recorded 67.6% of all detections in 2023 (Eurostat, 2023). In the first 10 months of 2023, a preliminary total of 927,030 asylum applications were submitted in Member States of the European Union. This represents a 21.3% increase compared to the first 10 months. Migration and asylum in Europe: 2023–2022 (764,050 applications in total)—the highest number since 2016: 1.26 million (Eurostat, 2023).

2. Literature Review

Vera Messing and Bence Ságvári specify that one of the most significant challenges facing European societies since the mid-2010s has been migration and the integration of newcomers into European societies. Looking deep inside this phenomenon, they mention that there is nothing new about transnational migration: European countries have experienced various waves of migration in their historical and recent past. These waves have had different triggers, and thus the challenges of integrating the immigrants have also been varied (Messing and Ságvári, 2024).

Migration is the process of population movement, whether within a state or across an international border (International Organization for Migration, 2004). The movement of the population within a country is considered immigration, while the movement of people abroad is considered emigration. Migration can be long-term or short-term, internal or international. As many reports show, migration is a global phenomenon, and today it is very current. Migration takes place for various reasons, including political instability, poverty, conflict, environmental degradation, and natural disasters (Mema, Aliaj and Matoshi, 2019, p. 11). With the progress of telecommunications, transportation, and technology in general, people move much faster and more easily than before. For this reason, migration, whether voluntary or compulsory, is developing at high rates all over the world. People are moving in greater numbers and more quickly compared to other periods in history. This process is occurring at a time when many countries are unprepared to cope with demographic change and when policies and attitudes towards the movement of the population and emigration have significantly strengthened (Mema, Aliaj and Matoshi, 2019, p. 11).

According to Pachocka and Pszczółkowska, migration, which is one of the most common social processes in the world today, brings a number of both benefits and challenges. Unfortunately, in recent years and especially in receiving countries, there has been a growing conviction that migration is a source of problems such as crime, poverty, or lower social cohesion. Many opinions are formed based on stereotypes or unverified information repeated in the media. Simplifying somewhat, we can say that attitudes towards migrants and migration in Europe and the United States are today more negative than at any time since World War II. At the same time, a world without migration and migrants simply would not exist. We thus need to search for new theoretical concepts that would help solve this challenge. One of the solutions worth considering is a better interconnection between immigration and integration policies, which, together, form part of a broadly understood migration policy.

The integration of immigrant minorities is a major concern for diverse societies, with major implications for the well-being of those affected, social cohesion and group relations, and economic and social progress (Heath and Schneider, 2021). Why asylum seekers fail to obtain the right to stay in the countries they apply for? Hadj Abdou Leila and Kollar Eszter underline that given the political, exclusionary developments, there is an increased need to focus on the question which moral obligations we have towards rejected asylum seekers. For them this is an ethical guideline for policy debates (Hadj and Kollar, 2021, p. 9).

While Europe has experienced different kinds of migration at various junctures in its history, the „migration crisis" of 2015 has once again drawn attention to and quite emphatically placed political membership in Europe (and the limits thereof) back on the agenda (Foblets, Leboeuf, Yanasmayan, 2018, p. 3) 2015 saw the arrival of record numbers of asylum seekers, and this influx continues to have powerful repercussions, dividing Europeans between solidarity with those in need and fear for their own identity and economic resources (Foblets, Leboeuf, Yanasmayan, 2018, p. 3).

Andrew Geddes, Leila Hadj-Abdou and Leiza Brumat explore the dynamics of migration and mobility in the EU including different types of migration; the EU's policy framework within which national policies are now located; considering the widespread notion and public perception of policy failure in this field (Geddes et al., 2020). In this regard, Zsolt Kapelner explains that many refugees worldwide are hosted in non-democracies where democratic inclusion is something not even citizens enjoy. And even democratic societies often actively try to exclude refugees from the shared life in which they are meant to participate through border externalization, encampment, and similar measures (Zsolt, 2024, p. 117). On the other side, Ilir Gëdeshi and Russell King find out that the notion of potential migration is not well embedded or widely discussed in the migration literature.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines: Potential migration is 'absolute number of adults planning or preparing to migrate... relative to the size of the population in the respective country'. They think that it can be conceptualized, calculated, or predicted in two main ways: statistically, based on the 'macro logics' of economic and demographic parameters (Gëdeshi and King, 2018). International migrants may face social exclusion due to intersecting individual social identities and the interplay between systems of privilege and oppression that uphold social inequalities at the socio structural level. Limited access to education, health services, or political engagement separately may not signify social exclusion; how-ever,

barriers to all of these (and others) are mutually reinforcing (Crawford, Kapisavanhu, Moore, Crawford, and T. Lundy, 2023)

In addition to coping with poverty and social exclusion, which have a negative impact on health, migrants may also find it difficult to cope with an unfamiliar healthcare environment (Denis Mema, Sulltana Aliaj and Alfred Matoshi, 2019: 12). The European population is aging rapidly. Therefore, the countries that make up the EU need immigrants to work and help economic growth. Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides immigration policy, with the aim of creating a comprehensive European immigration policy based on solidarity, a forward-looking approach, and a balanced approach to both legal and irregular immigration.

The main reviews of European policy since 2008 have focused on legal immigration, integration, and irregular immigration. Ledoux et al. (2018) studied the inclusive policies in health for migrants in Ireland, Spain, and Portugal. During recent decades, topics like migration and the portrayal of migrants have gained attention in Europe (Elona Dhëmbo, Erka Çaro, and Julia Hoxha, 2021). For these reasons, Edgar Grande, Tobias Schwarzbözl, and Matthias Fatke underlined that at the European level, existing legal obligations and commitments, for example in the field of asylum policy, have caused controversies among member states and have met with domestic resistance (Grande, E., Schwarzbözl, T., & Fatke, M. 2018).

3. Data and Methodology

In this paper, the hypothesis is that mismanagement and neglect of compliance with laws and ethical principles harm the integration of immigrants into Western societies. This paper specifically aims to bring together and analyze the German, British, and Italian approaches that have given different results regarding the integration or exclusion of immigrants from their societies. The paper will explore how the success or failure of the reforms undertaken relates to immigration trends.

We will use the qualitative method, and the quantitative method, measuring the support or not of public opinion in Albania, mainly among well-educated young people. We focus on the following research questions: Which of the models can be considered closer to the principles of international law? How visionary are the policies of the host countries? Will the case of Albania be the best example of the awareness of Europeans that the EU cannot manage the waves of immigration alone and change the legal framework of the EU through new approaches?

We will answer these questions by taking a historical and current look at the waves of Albanian immigration and the challenges of integration into the societies of Western countries. Today, there are a lot of questions about migration policy, engaging a critical discussion about the democratic challenges. On the other side, it analyzes ethical dilemmas in policymaking on international migration and citizenship.

We have used data provided mainly by the fourth edition of the Albanian Security Barometer (2022) conducted in Albania by the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance, Securi Meter 2022, a regional survey from the Regional Cooperation Council, and the 2022 Western Balkans Regional Survey of the International Republican Institute's Center for Insights in Survey Research. We used the qualitative method, comparing the historical, social, and cultural factors, and the quantitative method, measuring the support or not of public opinion in Albania, mainly of well-educated young people.

4. Findings and Discussion

There is an obvious discrepancy between popular perceptions in the Western Balkans about the need for regional security cooperation and the actual state of cooperation among the countries of the Western Balkans. While surveys show strong public support for regional security cooperation, many obstacles prevent the intensification of security cooperation. Surveys show especially strong support for dealing with common challenges such as combating organized crime, terrorism, migration, human trafficking, natural disasters, and cybercrime.

The majority of respondents in Albania see the lack of cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans as an obstacle to dealing with security challenges. This is confirmed independently by the 'Albanian Security Barometer' and '2022 Western Balkans Regional Survey' of the International Republican Institute's Center for Insights in Survey Research.

The migration and refugee crisis in Europe in 2015–2016 gave a new urgency to the issue of immigration and integration policies on the continent.

The reasons for migration, as we mentioned above, are concentrated on social and political factors and demographic and economic causes. In this context, the EU in April 2024 presented a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, The Pact on Migration and Asylum which is a set of new rules managing migration and establishing a

common asylum system[1]. This step forward has been taken in a difficult situation for the EU. According to the International Center for Migration Policy Development, in 2022-2023, a series of natural disasters in important origin and transit countries of migration to Europe displaced millions.

Migrant Mobility Situation Report for the Western Balkans, January 2024, specifies that migrants and refugees try to reach Europe mainly via 4 main migratory routes, with one additional temporary route: Eastern Mediterranean route (background information); Western Mediterranean and Western African route (background information); Western Balkans route (background information); Refugee inflow from Ukraine (background information).

According to surveys conducted by the European Union's Eurobarometer between 2014 and 2018, Today, a median of 23% of Western countries name immigration as one of the top two problems facing their country, down from a median of almost half in November 2015. But while anxieties have decreased dramatically across the EU as immigration flows have slowed, immigration still remains a top concern for many Western Europeans. For example, in both Denmark and Germany, more people name the issue as a problem facing their country than any other (34% and 38%, respectively).

In the EU, taking biometric data and procedures for making and handling asylum applications will also reinforce applicants' rights, the rules on determining which member state is responsible for handling an asylum application, cooperation and solidarity between member states, and how to handle crisis situations, including cases of instrumentalization of migrants. The asylum and migration management regulation (AMMR) will replace the current Dublin regulation. In order to ensure a consistent approach to the national plans, the Commission will draw up its own five-year European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy. Papadogiannis, N., & Collinson, M. (2020) explores the ways in which the notion of integration has been construed in two European societies: the Federal Republic of Germany and the UK. Moreover, these countries have followed different trajectories in their institutional approaches to integration.

4.1. The Great Britain Model

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[1]   https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en

Up to the present day, terms such as 'integration' and 'multiculturalism' have been approached in a patchy and often contradictory manner by British state institutions (Papadogiannis, N., & Collinson, M. (2020). A growing body of scholarship has explored the increasing criminalization and securitization of migration in western societies, whereby expanding groups of 'others' are constructed as threats. These 'threats' include those to personal and national security due to crime and terrorism (Clare Griffiths and Julie Trebilcock, 2021). While the government has shifted the official narrative from a 'hostile' to a 'compliant' environment, the policies remain mostly intact (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

A defining feature has been how it has infiltrated many aspects of people's lives through the 'deputization of border enforcement' to third parties such as teachers, healthcare professionals, social workers, and landlords (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021: 24). It is within this recent context that, in March 2021, the UK Home Secretary, Priti Patel, set out the government's New Plan for Immigration.

The New Plan has been subject to a great deal of criticism from key charities and organizations (including the Law Society, Amnesty International, and Liberty) and around three-quarters of parliament (Clare Griffiths and Julie Trebilcock, 2021). People entering the UK 'illegally' are problematized as illegitimate and undeserving of a humanitarian response. By virtue of entering the UK 'illegally', migrants who arrive by irregular routes are also characterized as immoral and criminal. Closely linked to the problematization of illegal migrants is the problematization of organized crime and people smugglers. Across the document, there is a constant interchange between discussing organized crime networks involved in people smuggling and 'illegal' immigrants who travel via 'irregular' routes. All are characterized as 'criminals' who should be deterred and punished. The New Plan thus advocates a range of reforms to 'break the business model of criminal networks behind illegal immigration' (2021a: 18).

The New Plan emphasizes the rising numbers of people entering the UK 'illegally' via boats. It is of note that the UK is currently home to approximately 1% of the 29.6 million refugees forcibly displaced across the world (Refugee Council, 2021). It is also notable that the document claims 'the UK accepted more refugees through planned resettlement schemes than any other country in Europe in the period 2015–2019'. In 2019, people who claimed asylum in the UK made up 0.6% of the UK population, and 'of these, 56% had lived in the UK for sixteen years or more' (Walsh, 2021: 5). Narratives about the 'generosity' of Global Britain and the sense that immigration controls need urgent remedy can thus be challenged. Some argue there are 'no safe and legal' routes for refugees to reach the UK' (Mayblin, 2021). Other

researchers have countered such skepticism by arguing that there is no major migration management crisis. In the United Kingdom, the height of the so-called 'European refugee crises' coincided with ongoing Brexit debates and an already tense socio-political environment (Ullmann, Stefanie, 2023). Meanwhile, in the UK, it was the activism within some immigrant communities that reshaped political perceptions of the police (Marc Collinson, Nikolaos Papadogiannis, 2020).

4.2. The German Model

Immigration has become a major issue in German politics, with mainstream parties urging action to address the rising number of asylum seekers. But the rise in some regions of right-wing populism is forcing a reconsideration of the current German model for immigration (Graham Bowley, 2023). But these numbers do not include the more than one million Ukrainians who have entered Germany since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began and who are not required to claim as it has left them without the means to deal with the situation. In this context, the European Union has planned a major reform of its asylum laws, applying strict immigration criteria to include more individuals.

According to the latest survey of 1,302 eligible voters conducted by pollster infratest dimap, two-thirds of the electorate believe it is right for the German government to seek a solution at the EU level in dealing with refugees (infratest dimap, 2024). Meanwhile, more than 220,000 people have already applied for asylum in Germany up to August this year, an increase of about 77% compared to the same period last year. Some 73% of respondents to the Infratest survey believe that the distribution of refugees in Germany is functioning poorly, while 78% say the integration of refugees into society and the labor market is not working well, and 80% agree that authorities are failing to carry out deportations of rejected asylum seekers.

The growing number of asylum applications has revived the political debate over Germany's immigration policy. In the Deutschlandtrend survey, two-thirds of respondents were in favor of limiting refugee numbers. Meanwhile, though economists say the German labor market needs an annual immigration of 400,000 skilled workers, only 27% of respondents said overall immigration was likely to benefit Germany. What can be done to curb irregular immigration? Around eight out of ten respondents supported increased border controls as well as reaching agreements with African states to accept rejected asylum seekers. What are the challenges that migrants face when navigating the complex German immigration

policy? Integration policies in both countries have encouraged migrants to become culturally similar to the non-foreign-born population.

Policymakers in favor of integration largely believe that peaceful coexistence should rely on a homogeneous society (Papadogiannis, N., & Collinson, M. 2020). According to Klaus F. Zimmermann, these challenges include the gap between scientific insights and societal perceptions of international migration, which can lead to fears and unknowns about migration (Klaus F. Zimmermann, 2019). Overall, these challenges highlight the need for robust evidence, patience, persistent argumentation, and the integration of migrants and refugees into the labor force to influence public debates and policy-making on migration and integration in Germany (Ibid.).

4.3. The Italian Model

Italy is, for its own sake and geographical position, one of the Member States most affected by the humanitarian emergency and the difficulties are associated with managing asylum applications for irregular emigrants. Furthermore, there is a profound link between the Italian regulatory framework relating to the law of asylum and the European one (Scuto, 2017). After an unprecedented influx of migrants disembarked to Italy observed in the period 2014–2017 (with a peak of 170,100 migrants disembarked in 2014), the number decreased drastically in 2019 to 11,471 migrants disembarked. In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and related containment measures, the numbers increased again.

During summer 2020, many arrivals, mainly from Tunisia, were concentrated in Lampedusa, while in the autumn of 2021, a new phenomenon of arrivals was registered in Calabria. In the period January–October 2021, the number of people disembarked reached 53,275. (EUAA, 2022). According to MOI data, 105,129 people disembarked in Italy, 37,652 more than the previous year, marking a 55,79% increase in the number of disembarkations (AIDA, 2022). Info Migrants data show that more than 84,300 people arrived in Italy by sea between 1 January and 23 July, an increase of 144% in 2022; over half of them, landed in Lampedusa, (Info Migrants, 2023).

To address this crisis situations on migration and asylum, European Commission proposed a New Pact on Migration and Asylum on September 23, 2020. According to it, member states may be authorized to apply specific rules concerning asylum and return procedures.

Meanwhile, the migrant reception system in Italian territory is governed by legislative decree n. 142/2015, adopted in implementation of European directives 2013/32/EU and 2013/33/EU. Subsequently, some additions and modifications were first made by the Legislative Decree. 13/2017, which has made some urgent interventions on immigration, then by Law No. 47/2017 on non-foreign minors accompanied, and by Legislative Decree No. 220/2017. In the current legislature, first the D.L. 113/2018, subsequently the D.L. 130/2020 has introduced further significant changes (Camera dei Deputati, 2022).

The reception measures for asylum seekers are divided into different phases. The very first phase consists on rescue and first aid, as well as on identification operations for migrants, especially in landing places (Camera dei Deputati, 2022). The high number of migratory flows is challenging Italian legislation on migration. This phenomenon constitutes one of the main concerns for the Italian government. Meloni subsequently declared a state of emergency over the non-stop arrival of Africans (Balmer C., Amante A., 2023).

It seems that a new strategy would give Meloni a way out to manage this situation after the Albanian-Italy agreement signed on November 7, 2023. According to it, Italy plans to construct two migrant centers in Albania to temporarily accommodate migrants. It's the first agreement of its kind between an EU member country and a non-EU member.

Italy and Albania have historically had a close partnership, driven by shared historical events as well as geographical proximity. This led to the two leaders Rama e Meloni signing an official agreement, which sparked criticism on both sides of the Adriatic. But Giorgia Meloni, even after the agreement was signed with Albania, is trying to find other solutions to stop migratory flows. She has launched a significant foreign policy that seeks to restructure her country's cooperation with the African continent. Rome arranged a summit attended by over two dozen African leaders and European Union officials, led by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. What does this new strategy entail? The Mattei Plan has a four-year horizon. Also, it has provisions for Italy's support—and presumably the EU's—for initiatives building up exports, food security, and the sustainable exploitation of natural resources in Africa (Fasanotti, 2024).

4.4. Albania, a new model as a receiving country of migrants

Albania currently has the highest rate of migration, related to its population. The largest settlements of Albanian migrants abroad are found in Greece and Italy, due to geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and knowledge of the language (IOM, 2024), as well as the United States and Canada (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2024). Meanwhile, in 2022, there was an increase in the number of immigrants with Albanian citizenship towards Great Britain, which attracted considerable attention. A large number of Albanian immigrants crossed the English Channel in small boats, where many of them sought asylum, being identified as victims of modern slavery (Walsh W. P. & Oriishi K, 2023).

According Eurostat, transfers or personal remittances to Albania in 2021 reached 1.14 billion euros, an increase of 10% compared to the previous year. Remittances exceeded €1.2 billion in 2022, a 5.8% increase compared to 2021. This high value is reported for the personal transfers and earnings of workers employed abroad. As a result, Eurostat indicates that the primary source of remittances for Albania and the region is the European Union (Tirana Times, 2023).

In recent years, Albanians have been emigrating, especially to Great Britain and Germany. It is precisely from these two countries that the largest amount of emigrants' money is sent to Albania. Albania, on the other hand, due to its geographical position in recent decades, has simultaneously been a host country for legal migrants as well as a crossing point for illegal immigration. The country has also been affected by mixed migratory flows, which include refugees and asylum seekers, migrants, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and separated persons, as well as stateless persons. Regarding the treatment and reception of the category of asylum seekers, the authority responsible for asylum and refugees in the Republic of Albania exercises its activity in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the protocol of 1967, on the status of refugees. Albania has provided, according to the law, the principle of non-refoulement of refugees, which is defined in Article 6 of Law no.0/2021, Law on asylum in the Republic of Albania. (Decision no. 50, 30.1.2024). But what is ascertained from the detainees who enter the Albanian territory irregularly is that they do not prefer to seek asylum or stay in Albania. This people declare that they want to continue the path towards EU countries (Decision n. 50, 30.1. 2024). In this context, the new Albania-Italy agreement turns Albania from a sending country into a receiving country. In January 2024, Italy's lower chamber of parliament approved the deal with non-EU member Albania, followed a month later by the Senate. Also in January, Albania's Constitutional Court rejected a legal challenge that could have blocked the deal. Albania's parliament approved the deal too. (Euronews 2024).

What the Protocol provides, which is valid for five years, with the possibility of renewal and for another five years, is that the two structures under construction in Shengjin and Gjadër will have a maximum reception capacity for 3 thousand people. These structures will be used as a basis to assess asylum requests of immigrants, according to an accelerated procedure, up to 28 days at most, thus calculating the transit of 36 thousand immigrants per year on Albanian territory (Gjatolli E., Vale G., 2024). The costs of the operations will be entirely borne by Italy, and the jurisdiction will also be Rome. Italy will also take care of the disembarkation and identification procedures. Within thirty days of arrival in Albania, the migrant will then be repatriated or taken to Italy (Euronews 2024). Children and pregnant women will not be covered by the plan. The facilities are expected to be operational by spring in Italy and have their claims processed there.

4.5. Humanitarian and Legal Concerns

Referring to the statement of the representative of the Italian opposition, Angelo Bonelli, at the same time the head of the Green Party, the agreement was an open violation of conventions and international legislation. According to him, the Government was removing its external responsibilities, with the risk of creating detention camps, and this could lead to the uncertainty of respecting the necessary standards of reception and human dignity (AFP, Reuters, 2023). This deal worries many human rights activists. The European Union, however, sees the agreement as a possible template for the future. Italy has long complained about not getting enough help from its EU partners in dealing with migrants arriving on its shores from northern Africa.

Migrants from Africa seeking a better life in Europe have been a sensitive issue for EU member countries in the Mediterranean. Mainstream parties hope the new rules will allow them to refute anti-migrant arguments espoused by populist and far-right groups (El Pais, 2024). Its implementation would have a negative impact on a range of human rights, including the rights to life and physical integrity of people in distress at sea and the rights to liberty, asylum, and adequate remedy of people transferred to Albania (Amnesty International, 2024).

The Migration Policy Institute Europe says the deal fails to describe what migration procedures would be followed, leaving open questions as to how exactly the process would work (El Pais, 2024). Members of Albania's center-right opposition opposed the deal on human rights grounds. A member of the Presidency of the opposition

Democratic Party, Belind Kellici, has opposed the agreement, stating it was taken without giving any details about the signed agreement or asking anyone. He added Tunisia had recently rejected the same offer from Italy and called it "treason against Albania" and a "disloyalty to our country." He said that tens of thousands of young people leave the country every year while PM Rama "replaces them with illegal immigrants."

But what do Albanians think about this narrative of Prime Minister Rama? Is this agreement for a political solution, given Italy's support for Albania, or a humanitarian solution? Italy has promised 100% support for Albania's long and arduous path to the EU and in the near future. But this 'favor' of Albania will be rewarded with the support of Italy in the political aspect? Or is it a humanitarian solution, based on the history of Albania, which has suffered immigration throughout its history?

In the survey conducted by Top Channel on the website, 75.69% of citizens think that the agreement is a political solution, and only 24.31% of voters think that the solution is humanitarian (Top Channel, 2023).

5. Conclusions

In the conditions of the growth of the anti-immigrant spirit in Italy, France, Great Britain, and Germany, which are facing this new spirit of right-wing populism, the problems are now being seen separately from each other, and the solutions are also being proposed separately.

The migrant crisis has found no solution and has plunged the European Union into crisis. Already threatened from inside and outside, it seems that the path through which the European Union will try to solve this crisis, which has already turned into a political crisis for many of these countries, compromises will come and can be expanded. From these compromises, the immigrants will lose first, who will be the first to suffer; democracy and respect for human rights will be lost, which will now be just a political instrument. In the end, the European Union itself will also be called into question, which will erode itself and lose the legitimacy it has held until now, despite political threats in moments of crisis.

Following the models and attempts to solve this crisis, whether at the state or European level, a new solution model came through an agreement between the Italian and Albanian prime ministers. The agreement signed between the Albanian prime minister and the Italian prime minister for the creation of a camp in which a

part of the emigrants headed for Italy will be received, signed on November 6, 2023, has caused a great media uproar and not only that. From the method to the significance, the agreement could not pass without discussion and analysis. This agreement is new as a model for coping with migratory flows.

Albania is the first country in the Western Balkans to have signed and finalized an agreement of this nature with Italy, an EU country. Albania has been greatly affected by migratory flows from third countries and has caused the EU to turn its eyes to the Balkan countries that are the gateway for these immigrants. By means of this agreement, it is intended to strengthen cooperation for the management of borders, to fight against illegal immigration and cross-border crime, and to carry out return and readmission operations of immigrants.

Meanwhile, representatives of other EU member states, such as Bavarian Prime Minister Markus Söder, declare that this agreement can be a possible model to be followed by other European states.

The main questions that are worth asking are what level of democracy Albanians have in their country, how the agreement can affect economy and tourism, and, through this agreement, are we closer or further away from the European Union.

Many actors are skeptical about this partial step in front of the hole European crises. In this context, this agreement will hardly be a solution to the situation.

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