



DISCUSSION PAPER

THE ISSUE OF SOLIDARITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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An analysis of the sharpened debate on the EU in the member states

*"Solidarity mechanisms are not based on pure generosity but on enlightened self-interests"*¹

*"Our unity is based on deep ties: common roots and common values. It is those values that make us a Community and a Union, not just a market. The triumph of the last 50 years has been the triumph of those values in Europe, of freedom and solidarity, delivered through a Community of law."*²

The debate on European *solidarity* saw a significant boost since 2008, when more and more European countries were hit by the global economic crisis. Since then *solidarity* mechanisms that the monetary union was actually lacking have been put in place, accompanied by two decisive questions:

- What is solidarity within the framework of the European Union? How is the notion of European solidarity defined?
- What are the legal, political, economic and moral limits of European solidarity? How legitimate is European solidarity?

60 years ago, *solidarity* as a particular European concept was not based on a unifying dream of European federalists. It was rather rooted in the national calculation of implementing self-interests, motivated by the interconnection of various variables: the preceding horror of the two World Wars, the Soviet Union as a (potential) major threat for western European countries and an extremely powerful partner on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean: the United States. Among other factors it was the notion of European *solidarity*, which allowed each (founding) member state to explicitly develop its global position and own agenda, secured by a growing comprehensive European umbrella. Although the steps of European integration were taken consistently, *solidarity* as a European concept was not explicitly its basis and only turning into a wider specific European notion, incorporating social market capitalism and European unity.

From a theoretical point of view, *solidarity* as a rather simplified concept is embedded in the development of the nation state: the nation, which members are united by a social bond, is considered a community (*Gemeinschaft*). On the European level this notion is since Maastricht particularly supplemented by idealistically phrased common European norms and values, uniting not only its member states but especially its citizens. Yet *solidarity* means different things to different people and different governments. Any political, legal and even moral definition of the term can be re-defined and consequently contested by the (political) opponent. As a principle factor of European integration it is consequently and implicitly connected to the notion of (European) legitimacy. Yet it is decisively hampered by national considerations and (mental) borders.

The interdependent questions of European *solidarity*, its legitimacy and its limits create tensions among European policy makers, influencing national public opinion and not only affecting

¹ Jacques Delors in: Fernandes & Rubio 2012, Foreword

² Barroso 2007

currently popular macro-economic issues but the entire European policy umbrella, including among other areas, energy issues, the social and labour agenda, migration and immigration, environmental protection, agriculture, et cetera.

In a recent study, the Paris-based think tank *Notre Europe* proposed two conceptual distinction of European *solidarity*: one based on reciprocity and another based on enlightened self-interests.³ These two flavours of *solidarity* are either defined by the rationale of a simple transactional arrangement, rooted in a joint insurance policy against the possibility of a specific calamity or by the rationale of self-interest, which leads governments to identify its own national goals in a shared strategy of integration which consequently secures the stability and viability of the common project.⁴

In other words: European *solidarity* is either the concept of shared “homework” with equal partners/countries pooling common risks or the diversified (financial) support from stronger/richer member states for weaker member states in order to create or sustain (European) stability.

Yet *solidarity* is not a one-way approach but has to include commitments of responsibility by the country receiving (financial) aid. In that regard Vignon emphasized the intrinsic link between *solidarity* and responsibility and noted that *solidarity* only grows stronger with consequent responsibility.⁵

The present discussion paper will highlight European *solidarity* regarding four European agendas: 1) **financial *solidarity***; 2) **energy *solidarity***; 3) **immigration *solidarity***; and 4) **social *solidarity***.

Further questions:

- The triad of solidarity, responsibility and coordination – what does it implicate?
- Does European solidarity only occur in situation of crisis? → a “cyclical” European solidarity?
- What about the legal nature of European solidarity? What is written and how is it implemented?
 - The ambiguous concept of solidarity in EU law: legal duty or moral orientation?

1. Financial *solidarity*

In the public perception the current debate on financial European *solidarity* is often only reduced to the economic crisis within the Eurozone and the related sovereign debt crisis faced by several member states, the argument that richer northern states should pay for poorer southern states and the belief that the requested reforms are an opportunity rather than punishment. One intrinsic part of this discussion includes a causal link that is perceived by EU’s political leaders between *solidarity* and coordination: with stronger and more effective economic policy coordination, the current debt crisis would have probably been avoided.⁶ Consequently countries-in-need were blamed, indicating that they failed to apply the coordination mechanism (→ “cheaters”). The first provisions on *solidarity* and coordination within the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were introduced by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. In that regard *solidarity* was primarily considered in the establishment of the, originally only temporarily conceived, Cohesion Fund. Coordination was debated on two contrasting visions: member states avoiding excessive government deficits (→strict fiscal discipline rules) versus economic policies as a matter of common (European) concern. In the end the Treaty of Maastricht compromised on these two perspectives.

³ Fernandes & Rubio 2012

⁴ Fernandes & Rubio 2012

⁵ Vignon 2011

⁶ Fernandes & Rubio 2012

In the above mentioned report, *Notre Europe* concluded that *solidarity* during the crisis has been hampered by two main reasons: 1) the difficulty of EU leaders to define their own national self-interests in order to help others and 2) the actual lack of *solidarity* mechanisms in place.⁷ To the extent that *solidarity* has been evident, it has been a transactional zero-sum approach: creditors will do this only if the debtors do that.⁸ To this effect one can also notice the implicit interconnection of *solidarity* and responsibility. Yet it can be doubted that this kind of zero-sum-*solidarity* was envisaged in the treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon. However it seems that this specific form of non-reciprocal *solidarity* is needed during times of crisis but has to be stopped in times of stabilization, as the EMU is not intended to be a permanent transfer union.⁹

The economic crisis has forced all member states to adopt rigorous austerity measures to reduce public deficits and debts; yet monitored and punished with higher interest rates by the “financial market” if the political steps and financial cuts are considered insufficient. Facing this complex set of problems another level of financial *solidarity* enters the European stage and current discussion: budget and distribution *solidarity* and the negotiations on the EU’s longer-term budget 2014 – 2020, the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF). The expectations for the next budget are high, as an innovative angle needs to tackle today’s challenges and simultaneously creates opportunities for the near future. It entails the implicit trade-off between “I want my money back” and the “budget for integration” concept, strengthening the principle of *solidarity*.

The principle of European *solidarity* in financial terms is often circumvented by the member states’ perception of considering the budget negotiations as a zero-sum game and the debate of net contributor versus net receiver, where every single member state fights for its own financial gain.¹⁰ Additionally the current negotiations will be influenced by the impact of the economic crisis and national debate of austerity vs. growth, with the call for growth becoming louder and louder.¹¹ The Council of the European Union meeting on March 26th 2012 revealed that most of the net contributors to the EU budget are favouring a reduction by almost €100 billion.¹² Yet other member states, e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia are concerned that proposed cuts in the EU’s regional policy and its Cohesion Fund will directly affect net beneficiaries and lead to a shift of EU funds from the poorest to the wealthiest member states.¹³

From the citizens perspective the perception of European financial *solidarity* has been stable during the last two years; with Europeans being rather divided on this question. In 2010 Europeans were in favour of giving financial help to other member states (49% total agree vs. 39% disagree). Yet probably as a result of the continuing crisis, a slightly higher percentage of Europeans (44%) rejected this idea in 2012 but with still 50% approving financial help on the opposite side.¹⁴ A minor difference between member states also appears between pre-2004 and post-2004/2007 countries: 53% and 43% respectively find financial aid to other member states desirable. This is even further pronounced between the different countries. Richer EU countries, like Luxembourg, Denmark and Sweden rather agree with the idea of financial aid than the respondents in Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania.¹⁵ Yet financial help in the name of *solidarity* (55% in general) between member states enjoys greater support in the post-2004/2007 countries (62% compared to 54% in pre-2004 countries) and in the Euro-Zone countries (57% compared to 51% in non-Euro-Zone countries).¹⁶

Further questions:

⁷ Fernandes & Rubio 2012

⁸ Stephens 2012

⁹ Fernandes & Rubio 2012

¹⁰ Mijs 2012

¹¹ Cameron et. al 2012

¹² Kilnes & Sherriff 2012

¹³ Jenkins 2012

¹⁴ TNS Opinion & Social 2012

¹⁵ TNS Opinion & Social 2012; socio-demographic analyses show further difference along the factor of gender, age, education and political spectrum, see TNS Opinion & Social 2012.

¹⁶ TNS Opinion & Social 2012

- What does solidarity actually mean in the context of the European economic crisis?
- The triad of solidarity, trust and honesty as the interconnected expression of solidarity and responsibility?
 - Does the current European economic crisis indicate the breakdown of mutual European trust?
- Should the EMU turn into a transfer union with comprehensive and permanent solidarity mechanism between its members?

2. Energy solidarity

The European energy policy is characterized by three interconnecting core energy objectives: sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply. Article 194 TFEU stipulates that the Union's energy policy shall be exerted in a spirit of *solidarity* between member states to, e.g. (a) ensure the functioning of the energy market, (b) security of energy supply and (c) the development of new and renewable forms of energy. A recent Eurobarometer report indicates that European citizens (60%) favour coordinated actions in order to cope with energy supply problems, which also accompanies the demand for greater European coordination during the economic crisis.¹⁷ Only in Austria and the United Kingdom approval was below 50% (40% and 46%, respectively).¹⁸ The same report concluded that 79% of the Europeans would find it desirable to provide assistance to another EU member state facing significant energy supply problem in the name of European *solidarity* with the lowest approval in Malta and Romania.¹⁹ It is not surprising that the priorities of Europeans on energy cooperation and *solidarity* are strongly influenced by the national energy situation. Hence there is a close link between the energy culture, the national energy situation and the answers of the citizens.²⁰

Yet the EU's energy policy is still unable to successfully and simultaneously achieve its main objectives. Although the interdependence and level of political, economic and technical cooperation between member states in the field of energy is fairly strong, European energy policy is considered a highly sensitive issue of purely national interests, national independence and national competence.²¹ These circumstances hamper the development of a united EU energy approach and consequently endanger active energy *solidarity* between the EU member states.



Energy *solidarity* is often solely associated with the security of supply. Yet a comprehensive definition, based on the above-mentioned reciprocity concept of a joint insurance policy, does not only need to incorporate the contrasting and diverse needs of each member state but has to include a wide-ranging approach on the reduction of energy dependency,²² including the diversification of the EU's energy mix, the integration of energy networks and the countries common interest and willingness to solidarity implement these objectives.

¹⁷ TNS Opinion & Social 2011

¹⁸ TNS Opinion & Social 2011

¹⁹ TNS Opinion & Social 2011

²⁰ European Parliament, DG for Communication 2011

²¹ Delors, Nilsson, Andoura & Buffetaut 2012

²² The EU-27 dependency on imported energy has grown extensively from 1999 to 2009, reaching 53.9% (which amounts for a periodical increase of 9%). Over that period, Poland presented the highest increase with its dependency rising from 9.8 % to 31.7 %; see Eurostat 2011. Consequently the Polish citizens are highly concerned about security of supply; see European Parliament, DG for Communication 2011. Yet it can be observed that the dependency rates were actually decreasing in most of the other member states; see Eurostat 2012a.

Yet it seems that European energy *solidarity* is still at the very beginning, as the actors are unable to agree on a common EU energy policy, based on the fundamental idea of shared “homework” pooling the common risk of European energy sovereignty.

Financial and energy *solidarity*: a comparison

The comparison between the results of the Eurobarometer 74.1 “The Europeans and the [financial] crisis” and the above-mentioned one “The European Union and Energy” (Eurobarometer 74.3) showed that the respondents in all 27 member states gave substantially the same answer with regard to financial and energy *solidarity*. The *solidarity* concept, either in economic or energy terms was particularly favoured in Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark and Cyprus and less preferred in Romania, Slovenia and Bulgaria.²³ Yet, taking also the percentages of chapter 1 into consideration, it cannot be concluded that citizens in richer member states express more *solidarity* than those in poorer member states.

3. Asylum and border management *solidarity*

Solidarity on asylum and border management within the EU has a direct relation to free movement within the Schengen Area. Whereas the Tampere Programme (1999-2004) had laid the groundwork for the creation of European asylum policy and for a harmonisation of the border management legislation, the Schengen Area, a long standing symbol of free movement within the EU, is challenged. The concept of *solidarity* in asylum and border management is politically questioned, even though the Treaty of Lisbon has reaffirmed this principle in its article 80 TFEU. The article states that “*the policies of the Union in the field of borders management, asylum and immigration [Articles 77 to 79] shall be governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the member states*” when such measures are necessary”.²⁴ This section aims to briefly point out the nature of the current *solidarity* deficiencies and to present a limited set of sharing-responsibility measures.

The nub of the matter is twofold: an internal Schengen crisis reinforced by conflicts arisen at the external southern EU boundaries.

On the EU internal level, the removal of the control of internal borders implies mutual trust among the EU member states, which means mainly policy harmonisation and rigorous controls of the external borders. The recent 'Franco-Italian affair' is a good example of the Schengen crisis. While Italy was delivering temporary residence permits, France was reintroducing the internal borders controls although they were both bound by the Schengen acquis. This internal tension has been reinforced by external conflicts arisen in the EU Mediterranean neighbourhood starting in 2010. The so-called Arab Spring has generated the largest scale flows of mixed migrants in the region since the first Gulf War, and has increased *migratory pressure on the EU's* external borders, notably those bordering the Mediterranean and in the South East.

The Dublin II Regulation determines which state is responsible for considering an application for asylum or subsidiary protection on the basis of two criteria: the first Schengen country of entry and family reunification. As result a large share of the migratory pressure affects member states with external borders (like Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus). The UNHCR has described the situation in Greece for migrants and asylum seekers as a “humanitarian crisis”.²⁵The recent

²³ European Parliament, DG for Communication 2011

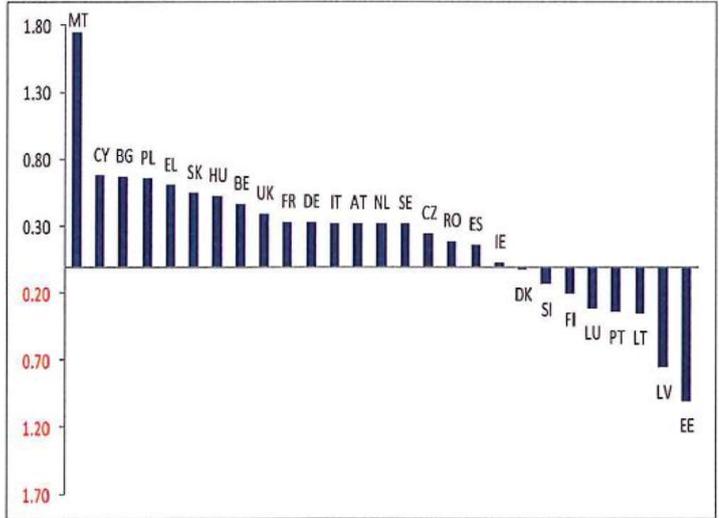
²⁴ Article 4(3) TEU has introduced two modifications in comparison to Article 10 EC: the idea of ‘mutual respect’, implying that the institutions must not transgress upon the prerogatives of the other; and the duty of cooperation which applies to tasks that ‘flow from the Treaties’. Thus, it has establishing a more open-ended duty than previously under Article 10 EC.

²⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/4c98a0ac9.html>

ruling of the ECHR states that both Greece and Belgium violated the European Convention when applying the Dublin Regulation,²⁶ which demonstrates the limits of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Consequently seven Schengen countries²⁷ suspended transfers back to Greece. This suspension mechanism proposed by the Commission in 2008 is limited to two situations. On the one hand, if there are serious doubts on the standards of protection in terms of reception conditions and access to the asylum procedure in the responsible member state. On the other hand, if the responsible state is already facing a migratory peak. However, the *solidarity* measures in the revised Dublin regulation still have to be negotiated by the EP and the Council, and it appears already controversial among member states which have expressed vigorously their preferences for an “early warning mechanism” at the March Council in 2012.

Member states without external borders (Austria, Czech Republic, Luxembourg) and those with more easily manageable sea borders (for example the Nordic countries) assess that those who call for *solidarity*, should first ensure the harmonisation of their national asylum systems. According to Eurostat, citizens in Sweden (92%), Germany (91%), Finland (91%), Belgium (90%) and the Netherlands (90%) are particularly likely to agree that rules for admitting asylum seekers should be the same within the EU. In 26 member states at least, three quarters of respondents think that the rules for asylum seekers should be the same across the EU, Latvia being the exception.²⁸ However given the large migratory influx compared to the size of their population many of the southern EU countries have not been able to implement EU rules correctly, and the completion of the CEAS has been negatively affected by this.²⁹ Against the backdrop of this situation, there is a whole set of instruments that put *solidarity* and responsibility at the heart of the EU action in the field of asylum and border management through practical and financial cooperation but also physical redistribution.³⁰

Figure 1. Asylum applications compared with GDP per capita, population and population density (source: European Parliament, 2010, p.68)



Recently, Greece has implemented a New Action Plan thanks to which asylum recognition rates have passed from less than 1% to 12.35%.³¹ This improvement was, among other things, possible through EU practical and financial cooperation. Some member states have shown their *solidarity* under the condition that the country pressured by migrations has to control its borders more rigorously. Border management led by FRONTEX is also an essential for responsibility-sharing. Another example of practical cooperation are initiatives such as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), set up to assist with disseminating best practice methods in order to avoid national asylum systems deficiencies and fostering information exchange to help with the processing claims for the EU as a whole. Nevertheless, the EASO is still at its infancy and need to be developed further. Current debates are focusing on the

²⁶ *M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece* the Court judged on 21 January 2011
²⁷ Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom
²⁸ Eurostat 2012b
²⁹ The deadline for CEAS including the Dublin Regulation, the Asylum Procedures Directive, Reception Conditions Directive and the Qualification Directive has been delayed to full completion by the end of 2012, instead of 2010.
³⁰ European Commission 2010
³¹ European Commission 2011a

compensatory 'sharing' measures to the Dublin Regulation through a practical tool, such as internal physical redistribution, or a financial compensation.

When tackling the topic of internal physical redistribution, there are several different tools³² which all request to ensure common standards of protection across Europe when implementing them. In the public perception, the view that the number of asylum seekers should be shared more equally across member states is strongest in Cyprus (93%), followed by Greece (89%), Belgium (88%), Italy (87%), Spain (86%), Germany (86%) and Luxembourg (86%).³³ While looking outside the asylum system, the introduction of a permanent relocation procedure supported by the EASO has been highlighted by European officials but also by the majority of the member states. Only, France and Czech Republic, fearing the pull factor effect, do not consider this instrument as sustainable for responsibility-sharing across Europe.³⁴ In June 2009, the Commission implemented an EU-wide pilot project, the EUREMA (EU Relocation Malta Project), co-financed by the European Refugee Fund. Relocation is the transfer of beneficiaries of international protection from one member state to another, with the receiving member state assuming responsibility for the persons. The project was beneficial for 227 refugees from Malta to six other member states. It was suggested that relocation could be legally developed on the basis of article 80 TFEU, but at this stage this tool is highly dependent of the public opinion, and thus, seems only to be acceptable as a bi-lateral initiative.

Others EU member states prefer to act through the EU financial compensation programme³⁵. This programme includes four funds which represent 0.7-0.8% of the total EU budget. Theoretically, the **financial instruments** seem to be an effective tool for *solidarity* but in

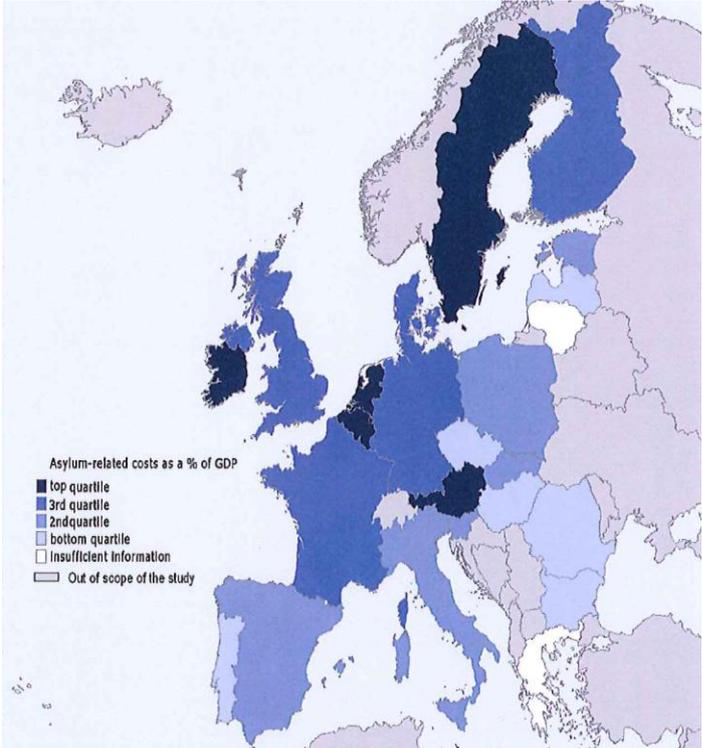


Figure 2. Total cost of asylum policy per GDP (source: European Parliament 2010, p. 83)

practice member states have observed that the sums involved in the various funds are symbolic rather than de facto compensatory. For instance, even if the amount of the ERF has tripled, while comparing the period 2003-2008 and 2008-2013, passing from €216 million to €628 million respectively, it is limited compared to the total asylum costs recorded. In Germany, the integration costs amounted to €352 million in 2006, when in Sweden, the spending arisen until €842 million in 2008. In Ireland, the migration expenditures were off to €118.6 million in 2006. For the European Parliament, even if these data are not similar and concerned only three countries, it stresses the fact that the costs related to migration in EU27 exceeds the available amount of the funds.³⁶ Nevertheless, financial tools remain important for member states under migration pressure.

³² For example the Temporary Protection Directive, the temporary suspension of Dublin, the EASO facilitating internal re-allocation on voluntary basis, the intra-EU refugee resettlement program under the CEAS (Sweden and UK) and ad-hoc measures that have taken place (e.g. France in 2009 and the Netherlands 2006 agreements with Malta).

³³ Eurostat 2012b

³⁴ European Parliament, DG for Internal Policies 2010

³⁵ The General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows", 2008/22/EC

³⁶ European Parliament, DG for Internal Policies 2010

This non exhaustive overview of the EU policy and tools in the fields of asylum and borders management points out the fact that we are far from achieving the CEAS, initially promised for 2010. Due to the above mentioned challenges, the completion of the CEAS has been postponed for the end of 2012. Nevertheless, the diversity of policy options and instruments designed highlights the difficulties of framing a coherent EU response to the current crisis. More broadly, this lack of coherence translates a lack of *solidarity*, if not technical, a political one. It is important to take into account that two thirds (67%) of Europeans think that it is fundamental to be able to travel within the EU without internal border controls.³⁷ In comparison with the Eurozone crisis, to what extent political EU leaders are inclined to foster *solidarity* in order to set up a new chapter of EU integration history? In view of the recent Home Affairs Ministers meeting in Luxembourg, and their compromise to reintroduce border controls "as a last resort" for a maximum of two years when other countries fail to secure their borders, the way forward a better and stronger Europe is certainly not a foregone conclusion.

Further questions

- How could the Dublin system be supported by relocation or financial compensation initiatives? How do you compare the practical usefulness and cost-effectiveness of relocation initiatives compared to other solidarity measures? How that could be made politically feasible within the European Union these days?
- How much relief can be expected from a fully functioning EASO?
- This section was tackling the solidarity and sharing-responsibility measures in the field of asylum and borders management. How these instruments could be transposable towards other categories of migrants and/or other aspects of migration management?
- Does the economic situation in member states like Greece, where government services may be reduced, pose a risk for its efforts to manage the EU external border and to improve the functioning of the their asylum system?

4. *Solidarity and intra-EU mobility of workers*

This part of the paper is dedicated to the concept of *solidarity* within the social policy, focusing on intra-EU labour market mobility. A very visible effect of the financial crisis has been the raise of unemployment in EU member states since 2009. Especially in this context of crisis it is commonly perceived by national public opinion that there is a link between the raise of unemployment, costs of social benefits and intra-EU migration. The notion of *solidarity* is linked to intra-EU labour mobility since it lies in the opening of national labour markets to workers from other EU countries.

The free movement of workers is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to EU nationals by the Treaty of Rome. Yet larger discrepancies between the labour market situation and wages between old and new member states made intra-EU labour mobility becoming an issue more salient and based on the difference between 'sending' and 'receiving' countries. Accession Treaties of 2003 and 2005 allowed member states to introduce transitional restrictions for 2004 and 2007 enlargements in order to gradually open their market (Malta and Cyprus being the exception).³⁸

The UK, Ireland and Sweden opened their labour markets straight away after 2004 enlargement. Transitional periods after 2004 enlargement lasted until 30 April 2011. Germany and Austria lifted restrictions the last, at the very end of this period.³⁹ EU-10 (except Malta and Hungary), Sweden and Finland opened their labour market straight away after 2007 enlargement. Austria,

³⁷ Eurostat 2012b

³⁸ European Commission 2006

³⁹ Europa, Press Release 2011

Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands still keep restrictions on the access of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals until the last possible date, 31 December 2013.⁴⁰

Free movement of workers is perceived differently by European peoples and by national governments. A survey shows that 60% of the Europeans are think that people moving within the EU is a good thing for European integration, 50% think it is a good thing for the labour market, and 47% think it is a good thing for the economy.⁴¹ In Austria, some 70% of respondents think that the opening of the labour market will have a negative effect on the country.⁴² Sweden stands out with 79% of respondents saying that mobility is a good thing for the labour market and has thus opened its labour market to EU-8 and then EU-2 before the date.⁴³

The main reason put forward to introduce restrictions was to avoid a massive influx of migrants from new EU countries.⁴⁴ EU governments restricting their labour market feared mostly negative economic and social consequences arising from this opening: threat of national economies with increase of nationals' employment rate and of the costs on national social welfare. Germany and Austria also claimed their location close to Eastern European countries to support their argument.⁴⁵

Only 10% of Europeans have lived and worked abroad (EU and/or non EU) at some point in their life.⁴⁶ A 2007 survey below shows that EU-10 and EU-2 migrate the most to work in another EU country. The most popular destinations for intra-EU workers were the UK for Poles, Slovaks, Lithuanians and Spain for Romanians and Bulgarians.

Citizenship of EU-nationals resident four years or less in another EU Member State by main EU destination country (percentage of overall number of working age nationals resident four years and less in another Member State)					
PL	59%	UK	17%	IE	11%	DE
RO	57%	ES	26%	IT	2%	UK
DE	33%	FR	22%	AT	18%	UK
UK	39%	FR	20%	ES	18%	IE
FR	35%	UK	16%	DE	16%	BE
PT	31%	ES	28%	FR	28%	UK
BG	56%	ES	15%	DE	7%	EL
SK	55%	UK	21%	CZ	11%	IE
IT	26%	ES	23%	UK	21%	FR
LT	52%	UK	33%	IE	10%	DE
Other EU citizens	38%	UK	17%	DE	9%	FR
All recent intra EU-movers	32%	UK	18%	ES	10%	IE

Figure 3. Main destination countries of recent intra-EU movers (age group 15-64) 2007 (source: TNS Opinion&Social 2010)

Some countries drew lessons from 2004 enlargement. The UK and Ireland which fully opened its borders to workers migration to EU-8 experienced greater flows than expected, and thus applied restrictions measures to EU-2⁴⁷. Yet the 2008 Commission's Communication⁴⁸ shows an overall positive impact in those countries opening up especially beneficial to meet labour demand in receiving countries without causing serious labour market disturbances. The European Parliament adopted on March 29 2012 a resolution calling on EU countries that continue to restrict the access of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to their labour markets, to review their

⁴⁰ European Commission 2011b

⁴¹ TNS Opinion & Social 2010

⁴² Allinger 2011

⁴³ EurActiv 2011

⁴⁴ European Commission 2006

⁴⁵ BBC News 2009

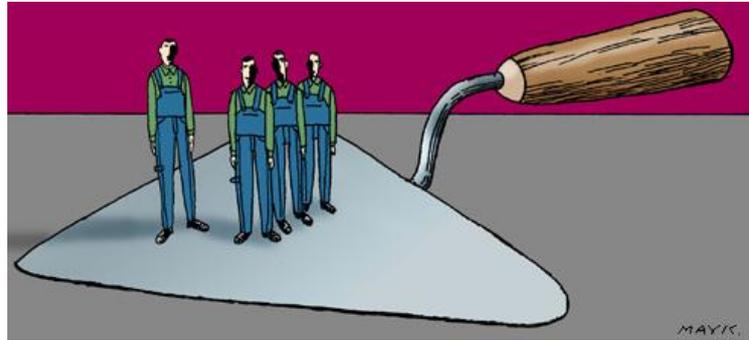
⁴⁶ TNS Opinion & Social 2010

⁴⁷ Watt, Galgóczi & Leschke 2009

⁴⁸ European Commission 2008

decisions as soon as possible, taking into account "the principle of equality, the prohibition of discrimination, the unjustified nature of those decisions and the principle of *solidarity*".⁴⁹

The opening up of labour markets entails sensitive issues that may be a pull factor in attracting intra-EU workers. Lately, the EU pushed member states, notably Germany, to introduce a national minimum wage in order to promote workers' rights and to leverage EU intra labour migration.⁵⁰ The UK notably seeking to opt-out to the temporary workers directive might affect the EU intra labour migration since EU citizens are often temporary workers in another EU country. Moreover in a context of crisis many of the workers losing jobs now are not entitled to unemployment benefits.⁵¹ This is clearly the case for informal workers, but also for regular workers holding temporary jobs as, in many countries, receiving unemployment subsidies is conditional to long qualification periods and/or the fact of being dismissed.



Everyone for Germany! (Source: Presseurop 2011)

Considering the concept of *solidarity*, the rationale of self-interest would lead member states to open up labour markets if based on the positive signals of the European Institutions. Opening up labour markets for all member states could be seen as a cost that is paid by the EU-15 who get in return a bigger market in the EU-12. On the other hand the reluctance by some member states to lift restrictions still in place can be explained by a rationale of self-interest based on the negative perception on this issue of their voters.

It seems that the *solidarity* rationale of a simple transactional arrangement or a common insurance policy, sticking by the European principles (e.g. equality, non-discrimination and *solidarity*) will be more of a driving force than self-interest.

Most member states introduced restrictions to EU-10 and EU-2, apparently based on self-interest. While transitional measures of 2004 enlargement have ended, the ones of 2007 enlargement will end in one and half years. Possible negative influence on labour markets or perceptions of national voters probably backed up their decision. The UK, Ireland in 2004 and Finland and most EU-10 in 2007 did not opt for restrictions based on shared European principles or an enlightened form of self-interest based on the assumption that opening up would be profitable for their labour markets. The absence of negative perceptions or economic threat led Sweden to apply no restrictions at all in 2004 and 2007.

Further questions

- Are self-interests of some member states not to open their labour market a way to further delay the achievement or in the contrary to protect the European project?
- Do member states see the opening their labour market as a benefit for the EU labour market as a whole or for their own national goals?

⁴⁹ The Sofia Echo 2012

⁵⁰ EurActiv 2012

⁵¹ Rubio 2009

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