

Final epilogue March 2016

After I, since June 2015 and December 2015 and having been to 6 refugee hot-spots/countries and having written and published about it and an in-between epilogue in October 2015 which was quiet extensive and analytic, I now kind of have come to the end of "Life is a bitch" and a final epilogue, although this time not so extensive, and some final personal words although everything I wrote was based on personal experiences and meetings and talks with refugees.

Anyways, let me cut to the chase as far as the so-called 'refugee crisis' is concerned:

**The E.U.** and its refugee crisis? No way, this is a comedy-drama serial and a E.U. crisis! And apart from it all it is a humanitarian crisis. And the E.U. in all of this has absolutely gone mental because by and by the E.U. has lost control over itself! Lets look back at things in a nutshell:

### **State of the non union.**

On September<sup>th</sup>. 2015 the European Parliament and during the first plenary meeting after the summer listened carefully to the State of the Union speech by Juncker, president of the European Commission, during which he couldn't but express his anger about how things were. Basically this is what he said: "The European Union needs more Union and the Union more Europe!!!"

Ok, let's see in a nutshell if the member states really listened:

One can say that 2015 was also the year of fences and walls: France/Calais>UK, Greece>Turkey, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Hungary and also ID control of refugees trying to cross from Denmark>Sweden and vice versa (the bridge) and Germany>Austria and vice versa and the Netherlands.

Also, and I have to throw up by the thought only, Denmark and Switzerland are confiscating, read stealing, money from the refugees which is equal to nazi methods.

The Visegrad Group (also known as the "Visegrad Four" or simply "V4" - the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia but recently they invited Macedonia – not a E.U. member state and Bulgaria to join them) reflects the efforts of the countries of the Central and East European region to not work together in a number of fields of common interest with the E.U. concerning quota of refugees. They also are top of the list concerning Islamofobia.

### **Greece:**

**Frontex** (from French *Frontières extérieures* for "external borders") is an agency of the European Union established in 2004 to manage the co-operation between national border guards securing its external borders. Frontex operations aim to detect and stop illegal immigration, human trafficking and terrorist infiltration. The agency has its seat of all places in Warsaw, Poland. On December 15<sup>th</sup>. 2015 the European Commission presented its proposal for a new European Border and Coast Guard Agency that would replace and succeed Frontex, having a stronger role and mandate and forming a European Border and Coast Guard along with national authorities for border management. But the E.U. intervenes in Greece with the erecting of registration barracks where refugees must register before they decide they'll yes or no be directed to another member state based on the quota but the E.U. gives 3 months to straighten things out themselves or else they threaten to expel the country from the E.U. At the same time as part of the Schengen zone an increasing number of especially Western European countries (for example The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria and France) are talking about creating a 'mini Schengen'.

Recently the E.U. asked the help of the Nato to put boots on the ground to guard their outer borders.

At the same time Greece refuses to accept that they are responsible for the influx of refugees as long as there is not a quota because the quota is not accepted by an increasing number of E.U. member states. "Unilateral steps to solve the refugee crisis and the breakup of international and European laws by EU Member States are a way to undermine the fundamental principles of European construction," said the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The responsibility for the migration and the refugee crisis can not be worn by Greece only." To give you an example: Greece registers approx. 2000 refugees a day where most of the other E.U. member states registers a maximum of 80 day.

## **France-Belgium.**

The French court has decided that 'The jungle' in Calais must be evacuated leaving only place for approx. 1000 from the 4 to 5000 refugees in barracks the gov. placed. As a result there's now a kind of ping pong game between France and Belgium where the latter is afraid that thousands will cross the border to try and reach the UK from there. The seaside city of Koksijde is threatening to erect a prison equal to Guantanamo in Belgium.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>. France decided to not stop refugees any longer who want to cross the chanel to the UK if the UK decides in favor of a 'Brexit' meaning they'll step out of the E.U.. The referendum in the UK will take place on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2016. The prime minister is in favor is in favor of staying part of the E.U. but his strongest and more popular London mayor Boris Johnson is vehemently against.

## Turkey:

As part of the E.U.-Turkey migration deal (Action Plan) signed in November 2015 and initiated by Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany, the E.U. made a 3-billion-euro pledge to improve the humanitarian situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, while Turkey committed to strengthening measures to restrict the flow of migrants and refugees towards the EU. Further talks on EU-Turkey relations and the Action Plan will be due soon (Read below). While the E.U. is increasingly anxious to ensure Turkish co-operation in reducing irregular migration, it is allowing its funds to be used for equipment and infrastructure in facilities from which refugees and asylum-seekers are being unlawfully pressured to return to countries like Syria and Iraq. Refugees held in the Erzurum detention centre showed Amnesty International labels attached to beds and cupboards advertising the centre's funding under an EU pre-accession program

E.U. officials in Ankara confirmed to Amnesty International that the six E.U. funded open reception centers outlined in the draft Action Plan on October 6<sup>th</sup>. will actually be detention centers. "It is shocking that E.U. money is being used to fund an unlawful detention and return program. The E.U. must ensure that its funding and migration co-operation with Turkey promotes rather than undermines the rights of refugees and migrants."

All of the detained refugees and asylum-seekers told Amnesty International that they were taken into custody in Turkey's western border provinces, including Edirne and Muğla, before being driven to outposts in the south or east. Most of them said that they were intending or attempting to cross irregularly to the EU. Refugees and asylum-seekers were detained without explanation or legal grounds in a camp in Düziçi in Osmaniye province or in the Erzurum Removal Centre in Erzurum province for up to two months. They were denied contact with the outside world, including to lawyers or their families; the only way people were able to communicate was through the use of mobile phones hidden from the authorities. One Syrian man living in Turkey embarked on a 23-hour bus journey to the Erzurum Removal Centre after his daughter managed to contact him from a concealed phone. However, he was told by authorities upon arrival that they could neither confirm nor deny whether she was actually in the centre. Amnesty International documented three cases of physical abuse in detention centers, amid numerous anecdotal reports of ill-treatment. A 40-year-old Syrian man reported being confined to a room alone in the Erzurum Removal Centre for seven days with his hands and feet shackled. "When they put a chain over your hands and legs, you feel like a slave, like you are not a human being," he told Amnesty International researchers. For many, the harrowing experience of unlawful detention was followed by deportation to Syria or Iraq after being pressured to sign documents in Turkish, which they did not

understand. Refugees and asylum-seekers told Amnesty International that the only way they could leave the facilities was to agree to return from where they came. In Erzurum, a three-year-old child was forced to provide his fingerprints as evidence of his consent to return to Syria, a 23-year-old Syrian man told Amnesty International. While researchers have documented more than one hundred forcible returns to Syria and Iraq from Turkey in recent months, it is feared that the actual number was far higher and included deportations to Afghanistan. "There is a total lack of transparency surrounding these cases and the real number of arbitrary detentions and unlawful deportations carried out by the Turkish authorities is unknown. This new practice must be investigated immediately to protect all refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey," said John Dalhuisen. Amnesty International is calling on Turkey to end unlawful detentions and deportations. The E.U. and Turkey should establish effective independent monitoring mechanisms to review human rights compliance of the E.U.-Turkey Action Plan and the use of E.U. funds for migration-related detention purposes. Until these measures are in place, implementation of the Action Plan should be suspended.

"We have documented the arbitrary detention of some of the most vulnerable people on Turkish soil. Pressuring refugees and asylum-seekers to return to countries like Syria and Iraq is not only unconscionable, but it's also in direct breach of international law," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Director for Europe and Central Asia. "By engaging Turkey as a gatekeeper for Europe in the refugee crisis, the E.U. is in danger of ignoring and now encouraging serious human rights violations. E.U.-Turkey migration-related cooperation should cease until such violations are investigated and ended. It is shocking that E.U. money is being used to fund an unlawful detention and return program. (Referring to the 3.7 billion Euro the E.U. said they are going to pay)"

And all this not to speak of dictator Erdogan who also chains, often literally, the freedom of speech and the press. On March 7<sup>th</sup>. he with a lot of police violence shut down the only remaining and popular newspaper Zaman. More and more the E.U. speaks of Turkey as a safe haven but only because they want to keep the refugees from where they fled in what they call neighbouring countries (Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon).

To (almost) close the Turkey part:

On January 7<sup>th</sup>. 2016 journalists asked him upon his return from a working visit to Saudi Arabia whether the presidential system where he aims for also could exist within a 'unitary State'. He answered: "In a unitary system (such as Turkey) can work perfectly in a presidential system. There are also examples in the world today and in history. You will see them for example in the Germany of Hitler."

E.U. and Turkey top meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>. and 7<sup>th</sup>.:

I'd rather call it a ping pong game in which the refugees were talked about as if being ping pong balls slammed back and forth and in between the Egeic sea, or also a poker game where Erdogan and his lackey prime minister Davutoglu played hard ball.

The 28 European Heads of State could not agree among themselves on a solution of the refugee crisis. The European Summit could not unanimously respond to the proposals and demands of the Turkish Prime Minister Davutoglu who suggested that all refugees who arrive in Greece to be shipped back to Turkey (Note of G. d'A.: excl. the 42.000 already in Greece according to a statement of minister of finances on March 10<sup>th</sup>. and the question really is if Turkey is suggesting this because they are so human or only to increase their chances to become a E.U. member state?). In exchange, the European countries were demanded to, in a legal way, organize the acception of Syrian refugees who were to be send back by air to and organized by the E.U.. (Note by G. d'A: as if there are only Syrian refugees!!). Also Davutoglu demanded three billion Euro, on top of the three billion already demanded before, extra for the reception of refugees in Turkey. He also demanded to start new negotiations on Turkey to become a member state of the European Union and demands that the Turks already beforehand can travel visa-free to Europe starting June.

The European leaders were totally surprised by the proposals of Davutoglu and disagreed among themselves. Also it is not clear whether the return operation of refugees is legal and it is also not clear how the airlift of Syrian refugees can be organized practically. In addition, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban resisted and turned against the idea of Syrian refugees to resettle in Europe. Also countries like Hungary and Slovakia were not keen to resettle refugees from Turkey. "There are countries that want a European solution and there are countries that want to do no effort. I regret this vision of a Europe that is addressed as Bancontact (Note of G. d'A.: referring to the opponents and being depended on loans of the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) for its own economic development, but that one rejects if in exchange an effort has to be done " He also said the E.U. does not want a 'push back' policy like Australia has and that Turkey is very far from becoming a E.U. member state. Charles Michel, prime minister of Belgium.

European leaders hope to reach a deal on a new top on March 17<sup>th</sup>. (because there's no deal yet as many media want us to believe!!) with Turkey i.e. to discuss the new proposals made by the Turkish lackey Davutoglu.

**Lock and sell out.**

Almost all media in the west had the same headline on March 15<sup>th</sup>.: "The E.U. and Turkey agreed unexpectedly fast on the issue of the refugee crisis."

My headline is quite different, isn't it?

Because it was indeed as if the E.U. went to a Turkish bazaar and got ripped off big time and they might think they now found a way to stop the refugees coming their way but I cannot say it enough: refugees are very persistent people.

And in general indeed the E.U. also sold out its ethics and views on human rights and freedom of speech and press and this apart from the fact that they accept that Turkey is at war now with the Turkish-Kurdish PKK and very close to war with Russia and the E.U. also basically announced the end of its existence by agreeing to do business with Turkish dictator Erdogan because a business deal it is and doing business with a dictator can only lead to one thing: the end of their own democratic standards.

Ok, let's see in a nutshell what they agreed on:

The E.U. ignores the Turkish violations on human rights and freedom of speech and press and accepts the Turkish demands on an extra payment of 3 billion Euro, the re-opening of talks of Turkey to become a E.U. state member and free visa conditions for their 75 million Turks. (In 2004 Austria back then opposed vehemently also saying: "Imagine they would all come here. That would mean a complete destruction of our economy.")

That all refugees who after March 20<sup>th</sup>. arrive on the Greek Islands are to be send back to Turkey. Europe in exchange airlifts' new Syrian refugees from Turkish camps (which basically means that Turkey now has a carte blanche to send all refugees back. Concerning new Syrian refugees that arrived after March 20<sup>th</sup>. it is not yet clear which E.U. countries will take them, and that it should happen on a voluntary basis. That means that the Eastern European and also Western European countries will not participate.

In general: there is talk that Macedonia would temporarily open their border with Greece.

## **The Balkan:**

In February 2016 the Balkan Visegrad group (East Europe) called for other countries to join them (Austria, Albania, Bosnia y Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

Update March 5<sup>th</sup>. and 6<sup>th</sup>.:

## **Balkan route:**

From midnight onwards Slovenia closed its southern border and only allows people with valid papers and "humanitarian emergencies" through. Most of the refugees could however not get a valid visa in their home country. Neighboring Serbia shortly after decided to do the same on the border with Macedonia and Bulgaria with which the route through the Balkans is practically closed. Croatia also will close the border for undocumented immigrants, said the Interior Minister. At the beginning of the Balkan route Macedonia previously closed its border with Greece where presently more than 14.000 refugees are trapped. Because of all this Greece is becoming more and more one big refugee camp with at present more than 42.000 refugees.

### **Can the E.U. lock out the refugees?**

I don't think so! As said before they are very persistent and one shouldn't be surprised because when one is fleeing from war and/or a dictator one has no other choice and seeks other countries where he/she can build up a new future. Darwin called it the survival of species. So naturally they are looking for new ways to enter the E.U. since the Balkan route is locked down. Here's an overview of possibilities incl. a + standing for very possible or a - for not recommended:

Libya route -/+ towards Italy: very dangerous but not impossible;  
Maghreb route -+: difficult because of the Street of Gibraltar sea and fences at the Spanish border but not impossible and the  
Russia route -: also here starting in overland Libya towards Turkey and from there on land towards Baltic states and from there to Norway and Finland although one can expect either fences or passport controls at the borders .

That it is possible proves the following: on April 5<sup>th</sup>. 2016 the Italian marine and coast guard saved in less than 24 hours 1.500 refugees on drift on the mediterranean sea. They were brought to the islands Sicilia and Lampedusa. Last year about 170.000 refugees entered the E.U. through Italy. Most of them leave from Libya and approx. 3000 didn't survive the crossing from Libya to Italy.

## **The IS aka Isis:**

You may ask what the IS has to do with the E.U. and if you do you're just plain stupid.

Especially after the attacks in Paris on November 13<sup>th</sup>. 2015 and before on the caricature magazine Charlie hebdo in the same city in January earlier that year.

Just to be clear: the IS has nothing to do with the Islam but is a political terrorist militia of sunis, selafists and jihadis and controls large areas of Syria, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria and recently also expanding its territory to Afghanistan. Also, it is supported by the UAE and Qatar.

A total of 4.598.691 refugees fled for the IS 'till now of which 245.022 million to Iraq, 635.324 to Jordan, 1.069.111 million to Libanon and 2.503.549 million to Turkey.

Ok, let's go back to the E.U. for a moment, acting like a crybaby saying they cannot handle the influx of refugees and really prefers to use the 'push back strategy' to what they call now safe havens, read Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

The population of Lebanon is approx. 4.468 233 million, refugees not included but because of the influx of refugees and the Sunni and the shi-ite militias and the Hezbollah supporting the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad the country is about to explode. Especially if one knows that only in Syria there are approx. 70 other militias and all fighting each other.

Now Turkey is a completely other story (read above) but still, they and the IS should really watch their back because there's the heroic Kurdish Peshmerga with boots on the ground fighting on different fronts and against the IS as well as against the Turkish dictator Erdogan.

Update February 15<sup>th</sup>. 2016

Russia and turkey are at the verge of war. Russia continues to support Assad in Syria but instead of bombing IS they are bombing the Kurds and as 'collateral' doctors without borders hospitals and schools and are also dropping cluster bombs.

At the same time IS is using mosterdgass against civilians in Syria. Where's the US? At the same time the IS is getting a stronger foothold in Libya creating a serious entrance to the E.U..

Prime minister of Russia Medvedjev recently said that a new cold war might be the result of the tensions between West and East and worst case scenario a WW3.



Conclusion: I don't think any E.U. country really listened to what Juncker, president of the European Commission, said. I wouldn't be surprised when these are the last years of the E.U. and the Schengen agreement. History is like a perpetuum mobile really as far as wars are concerned and before we know it there will be boots on the ground again in Europe read war.

I'm almost closing with asking your attention for 2 reports.

One is from the World Rights watch reporting us over the devastating situation on human rights incl. the E.U.. Please go to:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/european-union-0>

The other is by Amnesty international's report 2015 and especially about the breaching of the human rights of refugees among others. Please go to:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2015/02/annual-report-201415/>

### **Personal closing.**

Lucky me I'm, since long, not a journalist anymore. Back then many were socially motivated and in depth journalism was more than coming up with a catching head-line and scribbling a few sentences on paper by an elite corps deciding on what we read and see. Some journalists then and now also know refugees are not subjects but people!

Anyways, the more I went to refugee hotspots and met and spoke with many of them the more I realized that we cannot talk about a refugee crisis because it is a humanitarian and a E.U. crisis! And moreso and because of it we are heading straight towards a WW3. I already heard different politicians, left and right, predicting this. But what really worries me is when children are asking their parents and teachers and talking about there fears with their friends.

Also and more and more I feel like a refugee again, please read

<http://www.ginodartali.org/bitch/Auto%20biography-publi.pdf> .

And now, after I returned from the hotspots in Greece and Berlin, my body is battered and my psyche shattered.

My question is, like hundreds of thousands refugees have the same question: where will it end?

Speaking for myself: I have no idea. The only thing I know is that on top of the already existing hotspots tens if not hundreds of others will follow because refugees will always find a way in, fences/walls or not.

But there's no point in me continuing to go from one hotspot to another because as the Russian composer once said: "You can repeat anything and anybody but not yourself."

I do have a positive thing to close with though: the Kurds fighting the IS in Syria and Iraq are about to declare a very large part of Syria which they took over from the IS, as another autonomous part of the state of Kurdistan to be. They already have an autonomous part in Iraq. The Kurdish Peshmarga (of which at least 50% consists of female warriors) are truly heroic! [Click here for a short history of the Peshmarga](#). Respect!

I thank you for bearing with me "Life is a bitch".

Gino d'Artali