

# Environmental Migrations from Conflict-Affected Countries: Focus on EU Policy Response

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Dr. Enza Roberta Petrillo

## Abstract

Given the strong evidence that most environmental migration is likely to occur within the Global South, the analysis of this paper and many of its recommendations focus on EU external and humanitarian policies in the field of environmental migration, as well as foreign policy and humanitarian aid and development-cooperation programs implemented in conflict-affected countries. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the environmental migration debate with a multifaceted perspective that takes into account the relationship between climate change, migration and conflict. In doing so, it aims to highlight areas of particular political and geopolitical interest where further EU legal, policy, and humanitarian action is needed. On the basis of the analyzed legal, political, and institutional frameworks and the critical issues raised from the programs implemented in the field, I will indicate areas of political and geopolitical interest for EU external action and humanitarian aid strategy and where further EU policy action is needed.

Keywords

Migration, climate change, conflict, humanitarian aid, Global South, Africa, European Union



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# Environmental Migrations from Conflict-Affected Countries: Focus on EU Policy Response

Dr. Enza Roberta Petrillo

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## 1. Introduction

Climate change and environmental degradation strongly affect local, regional and international dynamics of human mobility from and in conflict-affected countries. Despite this fact, the EU currently has no rational legal or policy approach on how to face environmentally-induced migration or displacement. People who move due to long-term environmental change are seen as voluntary or economic migrants with no entitlement to protection, while those moving after sudden environmental disasters often qualify for short-term humanitarian aid, but not longer-term support.

This status does not change at the international level. Migrants facing climate change or environmental degradation are not included or protected under the International Refugee Law, which developed out of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.<sup>1</sup> They also lack protection under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights that guarantees the right to asylum but limits it to cases of persecution as defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention.<sup>2</sup> This lack of recognition has led several scholars to encourage the creation of an international law framework to address the plight of environmental migrants in need of humanitarian protection.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, since the end of the 1990s, several European policy documents have emphasized the need for further analysis in order to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon and its corresponding legal and policy gaps, including the latest European Commission's Staff Working Document "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration" from April 2013.<sup>4</sup> Taking this context as a starting point, this research examines environmental-forced migration from conflict-affected countries, particularly examining the role played by climate change as a "threat multiplier, which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability".<sup>5</sup>

Given the strong evidence that most environmental migration is likely to occur within the Global South,<sup>6</sup> this paper's analysis and many of its recommendations will focus exclusively on the EU's external and humanitarian policies in the field of environmental migration, including development and foreign policy, as well as humanitarian aid programs implemented in conflict-affected countries.

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<sup>1</sup> See McNamara, Karen E. 2007. "Conceptualizing Discourses on Environmental Refugees at the United Nations." *Population and Environment: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 29(1): 12–24.

<sup>2</sup> See Kälin Walter and Nina Schrepfer. February 2012. "Protecting People Crossing Borders in the Context of Climate Change Normative Gaps and Possible Approaches". UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series, PPLA/2012/01, 25.

<sup>3</sup> See, as instance, Biermann, Frank and Ingrid Boas. 2010. "Preparing for a warmer world: Towards a global governance system to protect climate refugees", *Global Environmental Politics*, 10(1): 60-88.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission. April 16, 2013. Commission Staff Working Document. "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration." Accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change." [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd\\_2013\\_138\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd_2013_138_en.pdf) .

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. July 2011. Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on the Impact of Climate Change on International Peace and Security, 3, <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/?nid=5424> .

<sup>6</sup> European Commission. April 16, 2013. Commission Staff Working Document. "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration." Accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change." [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd\\_2013\\_138\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd_2013_138_en.pdf) .

Does climate change threaten to overburden states and regions that are already fragile and conflict prone? If so, what are the implications for the EU's external actions in conflict-affected countries? To what extent is the existing EU external strategy adequate when facing environmental migrants from post-conflict settings? Finally, what role can and should the EU play to sufficiently respond to the challenges of climate change and migration in these kinds of settings?

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the environmental migration debate with a multifaceted perspective that takes into account the relationship between climate change, migration, and conflict while highlighting areas of particular political and geopolitical interest requiring further EU legal, policy, and humanitarian action. To date, the EU's response to environmental migrants from conflict-affected countries continues to isolate the conflict dimension as the main driver of migration or displacement; this paper, however, argues that EU policy following the 2013 Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD) - when the EU declared itself committed to addressing the issue of environmental migrations - has proven ineffective and declamatory.

Accordingly, this paper asserts that the EU's current political and diplomatic position has neglected the importance of the environmental migrants that come from, or are hosted by, conflict-affected countries, and that this approach has resulted in a vague response to such humanitarian concerns. To make this argument, I defend the view that, while EU-funded research and policy papers on climate migration are plentiful, no specific policy acts or programs address specifically the topic of multi-victimized environmental migrants. Through analysis of EU policies, programs, and governance structure, I will demonstrate how the EU's policymaking continues to ignore the increased forced environmental migratory flows from conflict-affected countries, as well as how this lack of attention could undermine the EU's external action credibility.

Emerging security challenges posed by environmental migrations have forced the EU to shake the rust from its old toolbox and respond to what UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon defined as a "threat to international peace and security." Despite these realities, I argue that better humanitarian action from the EU is still needed.

This paper further claims that the EU must re-examine the policies that led to the current European policy framework on environmental migrations from conflict-affected countries. Policymakers should abandon indecision and ambiguity toward this phenomenon and fully include it in the external dimension of the EU's migration policy.

I advance these arguments in the following order. Firstly, I provide a critical review of the major initiatives relevant to environmental change and migration at the EU level with a particular focus on the main EU policies, programs, and governance structure concerning environmental migrants originating in or directed towards conflict-affected countries. In this review, I attempt to understand the main challenges and gaps relevant to legal, normative, and institutional frameworks.

Secondly, I assess the impact of environmental migration in these settings, providing greater detail on EU actions led by the Commission's *Directorate-General* for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). On the basis of the analyzed legal, political, and institutional frameworks, as well as the critiques raised from the programs implemented in the field, I

will indicate areas of political and geopolitical interest for EU external action and humanitarian aid strategy where further EU policy action is needed. I conclude by providing recommendations to European policy makers regarding priority areas of political interest where further policy action is needed to overcome the identified gaps.

The methodology for this study comprises a desk-based analysis of academic literature and secondary materials including EU reports and statistics along with reports by international organizations and NGOs. Additionally, insights and extra information were collected through three semi-structured interviews to three key informants working at the EU level and with international organizations, and informal conversations with people working both at EU and International level in this field of research. Notes from the semi-structured interviews and from the informal talks were transcribed during and after each conversations and all data material was analyzed qualitatively.

## 2. Environmental Migrations from Conflict-Affected Countries. An Analysis of the EU Policies, Programs and Structure of Governance

Few imagine that EU Member States would seriously entertain conversations on environmental migrants from conflict-affected countries. However, given the international debate and the link between migration and climate change, the EU has started to reflect on how to adjust its policy.

As observed by Geddes and Somerville, “the European Union holds substantial regulatory powers over the environment and increasing power over migration. The complex, multi-polar and multi-faceted governance regime in Europe on migration and environment thus holds significant potential for policy developments on migration linked to climate change”.<sup>7</sup>

Historically, the European Parliament was the first institution to try to open new legal and policy frameworks to face climate migrations, starting by mentioning them in its 1990s resolutions on the environment, security and foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> This first EU act explicitly called for attention to be paid to “the impact of climate migrants on the EU immigration policies, on the humanitarian aid and, indirectly, in the increased security problems for the EU in the form of regional instability in other parts of the world”.<sup>9</sup>

In the recent years, MEPs from the Greens Party and SD have organized several seminars and hearings on this subject.<sup>10</sup> The Greens/European Free Alliance group launched its latest

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<sup>7</sup> Geddes, Andrew and Somerville, James. May 2013. "Migration and Environmental Change: Assessing the Developing European Approach". Policy Brief Series (2). Migration Policy Institute, 2.

<sup>8</sup> European Parliament. January 14, 1999. "Report on the Environment, Security and Foreign Policy." <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A4-1999-0005+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>.

<sup>9</sup> European Parliament. January 14, 1999. "Report on the Environment, Security and Foreign Policy." <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A4-1999-0005+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>.

<sup>10</sup> As told by the GREENS' MeP Jane Lambert, in 2011, the S&D group hosted a seminar entitled "Climate Refugees—A New Arena for Human Rights."

initiative in 2013 - adopting the position paper, "Climate Change, Refugees and Migration."<sup>11</sup> Starting from the absence of a coherent policy proposal from the EU on how to respond to the phenomenon of environmental migration, this document suggests using the provisions contained in the Lisbon Treaty to amend the EU's asylum and immigration policy in order to regulate climate migration. The Greens' awareness of the humanitarian implications of climate migrations represents one of the few attempts to question the security-centered approach that has characterized the climate migration actions promoted by the European Commission and the Council.

In 2008, the paper "Climate change and international security" prepared by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Commission drew attention to the fact that climate change could serve as a "threat-multiplier", exacerbating trends, tensions and instabilities that already influence migration patterns.<sup>12</sup> The document argued that Europe must expect substantially increased migratory pressure and recommended the development of EU capacities by building up knowledge and systems of monitoring and early warning. It further emphasized the role of the EU's multilateral leadership in promoting global climate security by considering "environmentally-triggered additional migratory stress in the further development of a comprehensive European migration policy, in liaison with all relevant international bodies".<sup>13</sup>

One year later, in 2009, the European Council included a paragraph on climate change and migration in the Stockholm Programme, stressing the need to explore the connection between climate change, migration and development, whilst urging the European Commission to carry out "an analysis of the effects of climate change on international migration, including its potential effects on immigration to the Union".<sup>14</sup>

To address this need, the European Commission organized a high-level, multi-stakeholder consultation to discuss the linkages between climate change and migration and to gather recent data and the latest thinking on climate change's effects on migration and displacement. Informants from the International Organization for Migration and the European Parliament<sup>15</sup> have stressed that this consultation was the first explicitly integrated analysis of different topics, such as forecast scenarios, evidence of the migration/climate change link, potential measures to increase third countries' resilience capacities, preparedness and protection responses to displacement, as well as legal frameworks to protect climate/environmental migrants. At the same time, the International Center for Migration Policy Development presented a study commissioned by the European Parliament on the legal and policy responses to environmentally-induced migration.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament position paper on climate change, refugees, and migration, adopted in May 2013, was drafted by H el ene Flautre, Jean Lambert, Ska Keller, and Barbara Lochbihler. "Position Paper. Climate Change, Refugees and Migration", accessed January 21, 2015, [http://barbara.lochbihler.de/cms/upload/PDF\\_2013/Greens\\_EFA\\_\\_PositionPaper\\_Climate\\_ChangeRefugeesandMigration.pdf](http://barbara.lochbihler.de/cms/upload/PDF_2013/Greens_EFA__PositionPaper_Climate_ChangeRefugeesandMigration.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> European Commission. March 14, 2008. Joint Paper from the High Representative to the European Council, "Climate Change and International Security" S113/08.

<sup>13</sup> Council of the European Union. March 3, 2008. "Climate Change and International Security." <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%207249%202008%20INIT>, 11.

<sup>14</sup> European Council. 2009. "The Stockholm Programme —An Open and Secure Europe Serving and Protecting Citizens.14449/09, JAI 679", 42.

<sup>15</sup> Jo De Backer from the IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the EU and NATO (Brussels), and the Greens' MeP Jean Lambert.

<sup>16</sup> International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). 2011. "Climate Refugees.' Legal and policy responses to environmentally induced migration." Brussels: Directorate-General for Internal Policies Policy

The European Council's conclusions on EU Climate Diplomacy, adopted in July 2011,<sup>17</sup> marked a shift from theoretical analysis to the identification of specific policies. The conclusions highlighted that climate change is a global environmental and development challenge with significant implications for security and migration. It also acknowledged the Joint Reflection Paper from the High Representative and the Commission, which sets out three strands for action on EU climate diplomacy:

- strengthening engagement with key partners,
- supporting developing countries, and
- mitigating security risks.

In May 2012, this plan was endorsed by the European Council's conclusions in the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which recognized the need to further explore the links between climate change, migration and development, including the potential impact of climate change on migration and displacement.<sup>18</sup> This background pre-empted the development of the April 2013 CSWD document, "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration".<sup>19</sup> The CSWD represents the culmination of the European Commission's efforts to commence a dialog on the inter-linkages between migration, environmental degradation and climate change. The European Commission produced the CSWD in response to a request made by the European Council to the Commission in the Stockholm Program seeking an analysis of the effects of climate change on international migration, including its potential effects on immigration to the European Union. The CSWD also provides an overview of the research and data currently available on the inter-linkages between migration, environmental degradation, and climate change along with a list of current EU activities in various policy fields.

Following this paper, on July 19, 2013, the Council of the European Union released conclusions on the 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, broadening the development-migration nexus by acknowledging that "climate and environmental degradation are already exerting an increasing influence on migration and mobility and therefore... the linkages between climate change, environmental degradation and migration should be further explored and addressed as appropriate, in particular in the context of development cooperation, foreign policy and humanitarian assistance".<sup>20</sup>

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Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/462422/IPOL-LIBE\\_ET\(2011\)462422\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/462422/IPOL-LIBE_ET(2011)462422_EN.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> European Council. July 18, 2011. "Council Conclusions on EU Climate Diplomacy," 3106th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting. Brussels.

<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, in July and September 2012, the European Commission organized two roundtables on migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change and the development impact of forced and environmental migration, respectively.

<sup>19</sup> European Commission. April 16, 2013a. Commission Staff Working Document. "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration." Accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change."  
[http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd\\_2013\\_138\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd_2013_138_en.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Council of the European Union. July 19, 2013. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and on broadening the development-migration nexus.  
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2012415%202013%20INIT>.

More importantly, the Council of the European Union's act emphasized that "the EU and its Member States should urgently take steps to deepen knowledge and further develop policy on a number of challenges which deserve further attention, including addressing the links between climate change, environmental degradation and migration, integrating protracted refugee situations into development planning, and strengthening the impact of migration on the development of both countries of destination and origin".<sup>21</sup>

Due to the growing interdependencies with other policy fields, such as security, conflict and migration, the EU's diplomatic body, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has increasingly acknowledged the external dimension of climate change. In a 2008 revision of the EEAS's European Security Strategy, climate change was described as a core strategic challenge.<sup>22</sup> Later, in July 2011, the EEAS, together with the European Commission, prepared a Joint Reflection Paper that reinforced the EEAS's commitment to linking climate change policies to the EU's core security policies: "While climate change alone does not cause conflict, it is leading to increased competition for scarce natural resources, further weakens fragile governments and exacerbates migratory pressures. More extreme weather events may lead to increased demands for EU Member States to provide humanitarian aid including civil/military co-operation, in disaster relief operations in third states".<sup>23</sup> In 2012, the EEAS took over the EU's Green Diplomacy Network,<sup>24</sup> an initiative that works towards better integration of EU environment policies into external relations practices through the exchange of information among member states and the commission's diplomatic networks.

In 2013, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council adopted the conclusions on climate diplomacy and security,<sup>25</sup> together with a new EEAS reflection paper.<sup>26</sup> These documents oblige ministers to annually review the progress made in introducing security policy parameters into climate change strategies. The reflection paper also claims that "more preventive diplomacy needs to be conducted, in particular by sharpening an EU narrative on the intricate links between climate changes, international and human security and natural resource scarcity and on how these links shape future prosperity, stability and development. This includes examination of climate impacts in developed, as well as vulnerable, countries".<sup>27</sup>

Regrettably, all of these commitments were not taken into account during the drafting of what has been defined as "the example of a long-term policy": the European Council's agreement on the new climate and energy policy framework for 2020 to 2030, reached on

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<sup>21</sup> Council of the European Union. July 19, 2013. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and on broadening the development-migration nexus, 13, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2012415%202013%20INIT>.

<sup>22</sup> European Union. December 11, 2008. "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy- Providing Security in a Changing World."

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf) .

<sup>23</sup> European External Action Service. 2011. "Joint Reflection Paper. Towards a renewed and strengthened EU climate diplomacy." European Commission.

[http://eeas.europa.eu/environment/docs/2011\\_joint\\_paper\\_euclimate\\_diplomacy\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/environment/docs/2011_joint_paper_euclimate_diplomacy_en.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> The EU GDN uses the EU member state and commission's extensive diplomatic networks to provide an effective means of gathering and exchanging information.

<sup>25</sup> Council of the European Union. June 24, 2013. "Council Conclusions on EU Climate Diplomacy." Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels.

[http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137587.pdf](http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137587.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> European Union External Action Service. March 26, 2013. "EU Climate Diplomacy for 2015 and Beyond." [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas\\_26062013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas_26062013_en.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> European Union External Action Service. March 26, 2013. "EU Climate Diplomacy for 2015 and beyond", 5, [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas\\_26062013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas_26062013_en.pdf) .



October 23 and 24, 2014.<sup>28</sup> This new framework will form the structure of the EU's contribution to preparations for the global climate negotiations, which will take place in 2015 in Paris. This agreement promises to curb greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, increase the amount of renewable energy to at least 27%, and set a non-binding target to reduce energy demand by at least 27%.

Van Rompuy, former President of the European Council, posted on his Twitter account immediately after the summit: "Deal! At least 40% emissions cut by 2030. World's most ambitious, cost-effective, fair EU2030 climate energy policy agreed." However, not all that glitters is gold. Emmanouilidis, from the European Policy Center, explains why the Conclusions' targets could fall short, when stating "following pressure from a number of governments, EU leaders have agreed on a 'flexibility clause' which will allow member states to come back to this issue after the global climate talks in Paris".<sup>29</sup> This flexibility clause implies that targets could be adapted in light of the outcome of these negotiations.

Similarly, many NGOs and the Greens Party<sup>30</sup> claim that the Council Conclusions represent just the beginning of the (wannabe) new political process celebrated by Van Rompuy. For them, the Council's Conclusions are inadequate and unfair, as they do not make any tangible contribution to human security dynamics in less developed countries caused by climate change. Natalia Alonso, Oxfam's Deputy Director of Advocacy & Campaigns has observed:

**"Today's target of at least 40% of emissions reductions is welcome but only a first step, which falls far too short of what the EU needs to do to pull its weight in the fight against climate change. Insufficient action like this from the world's richest countries places yet more burden on the poorest people most affected by climate change, but least responsible for causing this crisis."**<sup>31</sup>

Contrary to what has been stated in the Council Conclusions on "Climate Change and International Security"<sup>32</sup> and despite the Commission's recommendations<sup>33</sup>, the European

<sup>28</sup> European Council, 23 October 2014. "2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework". [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145356.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145356.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Emmanouilidis, Janis A. 27 October 2014. "Low key but not low impact: the results of the EU's 'transition' summit." European Policy Center, 4, [http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub\\_4935\\_post-summit\\_analysis\\_-\\_27\\_october\\_2014.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_4935_post-summit_analysis_-_27_october_2014.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> See "EU leaders squeeze life out of climate and clean energy policy at crucial juncture", accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.greens-efa.eu/eu-summit-13028.html> and "EU leaders agree on weak and compromised climate and energy targets", accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.caneurope.org/media-center/can-and-press/763-european-council-eu-leaders-agree-on-weak-and-compromised-climate-and-energy-targets>.

<sup>31</sup> "Europe must review climate targets after weak climate package deal", accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/pressroom/reactions/europe-must-review-climate-targets-after-weak-climate-package-deal>.

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Union. March 3, 2008. "Climate Change and International Security." <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%207249%202008%20INIT>.

compromise reached last October falls short both in addressing the links between climate change, environmental degradation and migration, as well as in enhancing coherence within the EU climate diplomacy mechanism.

Last Council Conclusions make no reference to addressing environmentally induced migration, narrowing the discussion agenda to the EU-centered economic perspective. In this context, the Global South is notably absent. No policy responses have been put forward to address the effects of climate change in the developing world, and no planning addresses the actions required to mitigate and adapt due to environmental change and migration in affected countries.

Even though the EU has declared that addressing the global climate is in its own long-term interest, it remains unclear as to how EU policymakers will respond to environmental displacements. As many scholars observed, at the international and EU levels,<sup>34</sup> existing agreements and instruments are not designed to deal with international migration related to climate change. Meanwhile, the Council's political agenda continues to be dominated by arguments related to energy savings and EU climate policy, leaving little room for other areas of climate policy-making, such as those related to human mobility, food security, local environmental quality, energy access, livelihoods, and fair sustainable development.

This approach also contrasts with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),<sup>35</sup> whose latest fifth report, released on November 4, 2014, has once again reaffirmed that climate change is projected to increase displacement of people in the Global South: "Populations that lack the resources for planned migration experience higher exposure to extreme weather events, particularly in developing countries with low income. Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks".<sup>36</sup>

The upcoming UN Climate Change conference that will be held in Lima in December 2014<sup>37</sup> will indicate whether the EU is determined to improve the global effectiveness of its climate strategy. Interestingly, there has been a change of pace at the European Environmental Council; during its October 28, 2014 meeting in preparation for the Lima Conference, the Council emphasized "that the 2015 agreement should contribute to assisting all countries, especially the particularly vulnerable ones, to achieve climate-resilient sustainable development".<sup>38</sup> Although this acknowledgement may appear to be a last minute corrective

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<sup>33</sup> European Commission. April 16, 2013. Commission Staff Working Document. "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration." Accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change." [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd\\_2013\\_138\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd_2013_138_en.pdf) .

<sup>34</sup> Bates, Diane C. 2002. "Environmental Refugees? Classifying Human Migrations Caused by Environmental Change." *Population and Environment* 23 (5): 465-477; McLeman Robert and Lori M. Hunter. 2010. "Migration in the Context of Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change: Insights from Analogues." *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 1(3): 450-461.

<sup>35</sup> See "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change", accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.ipcc.ch/> .

<sup>36</sup> IPCC. 2014a. "Fifth Assessment Synthesis Report", 16, [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/SYR\\_AR5\\_SPMcorr1.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/SYR_AR5_SPMcorr1.pdf) .

<sup>37</sup> The Lima Conference is the last of the intermediate conferences between Durban, where the mandate to negotiate a global agreement by 2015 was decided, and Paris, where the global agreement will be adopted in December 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Council of the European Union, 28 October 2014. "Council conclusions on Preparations for the 20th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the

measure towards a large-scale effort climate policy, it also represents real potential. Perhaps the issue of climate migration can be addressed holistically within the EU energy strategy in line with the IPCC's assumption, according to which "climate change is a global commons problem, and it is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity in the origins of emissions, mitigation opportunities, climate impacts, and capacity for mitigation and adaptation".<sup>39</sup>

## 2.1 EU's Policy Response to Environmental Migrations: Not Ready for Prime Time?

While the measures analyzed above confirm that climate security is now firmly rooted in the EU policy agenda, EU practical actions concerning environmentally forced migrations continue to be limited if not entirely deficient. Notwithstanding the profusion of commitments, to date the EU declaratory plans are still waiting to be translated into effective and coordinated policy developments.

Two main reasons that go some way to explaining this stalemate are:

1. polarization between the external and internal dimensions of environment-related migration policy, and
2. poor coordination between EU services dealing with climate-driven migrations.

While EU Member States have rhetorically integrated restrictive internal immigration policies with a strategy based on cooperation with third,<sup>40</sup> their policy remains in practice incomplete. They do not reserve any specific legal and policy provisions addressing the phenomenon of climate migrants at the EU internal level. Additionally, despite both the internal and external dimensions mentioned as relevant by almost all documents on climate migrations produced by the European Commission, the Development and Cooperation Directorate (rather than by the Directorate Covering Internal Affairs) *de facto* wrote the CSDW.<sup>41</sup> Far from being irrelevant, this authorship has many implications, the most important of which is the implication of an incomplete understanding of environmentally related migrations. These migrations have been described as a kind of human mobility mainly occurring "in the developing world, either with migrants moving internally or to countries in the same regions".<sup>42</sup>

Notwithstanding the absence of reliable data to prove that climate-affected people do not affect mixed migratory flows towards Europe, the European Commission has deliberately

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10th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol", 3, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/145508.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/145508.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> IPCC. 2014. "Technical Summary", 14, <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/tp/10.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> On this question, see, as instance, Collyer, Michael 2007. "Migrants, migration and the security paradigm: constraints and opportunities", *Mediterranean Politics*, 11(2): 255-270; De Haas, Hein. 2008. "The myth of invasion. The inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe." *Third World Quarterly*, 29(7): 1305-1322.

<sup>41</sup> See the analysis made by Youngs, Richard. May 2014. *Climate Change and EU Security Policy. An Unmet Challenge*. Carnegie Europe, 12.

<sup>42</sup> European Commission. April 16, 2013. Commission Staff Working Document. "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration." Accompanying the document "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.", 15, [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd\\_2013\\_138\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/what/docs/swd_2013_138_en.pdf).

upstaged the EU's internal implications of environment migrations. It pays no attention to the fact that migrants who would like to move to the EU from climate-affected contexts would in most cases not be able to do so lawfully, especially if they are unskilled and lacking humanitarian protection.<sup>43</sup>

No less important is the analysis of the activities led by the EEAS and the Commission's Services in charge of Climate Migrations ("Home", "Development and Cooperation", and "Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection" [ECHO]), which confirms- as noted by Kunz, Lavenex and Panizzon- how the implementation of coordinated effective migration policy remains a challenge for the EU's multi-layered level of competence and governance.<sup>44</sup>

The absence of concrete progress in understanding the strategic, political, and humanitarian risks associated with climate change is primarily attributable to the overlapping of competences among the EU institutional actors in charge of internal and external actions concerning environmental migrants, especially those coming from conflict-affected countries. Information from key informants has confirmed that the responsibilities for climate migration are split in a puzzling manner between three different EC Directorates-General (DG Home, DG DEVCO and DG ECHO), flanking the External Action EEAS. Neither these Directorates, nor the EEAS are tasked explicitly with leading environment-related migration. As stressed by the source from the Greens, "Even if the CSWD explicitly assigns the management of environment-induced migratory flows to the EEAS and the DG DEVCO, the question of who must do what has not been properly addressed."<sup>45</sup>

The Lisbon Treaty did not specify how the new institutional setting would work in practice when it came into force on December 1, 2009. Additionally, when the EEAS became operational on January 1, 2011, it remained unclear exactly what position it was to occupy in the pluralistic EU external policy-making system, where Member States and supranational actors already operate with varying degrees of autonomy and influence.<sup>46</sup> According to the MEP Jean Lambert,<sup>47</sup> these incoherencies were further exacerbated by the attempt to introduce the humanitarian dimension and the related migration policy discussion into the EC's DG Clima activities. This was the institutional arena established in 2010 to lead international negotiations on climate and to develop and implement the EU Emissions Trading System, a directorate described by one interviewed Greens' MEP as being caught "in the trap of economic growth and structurally resistant to the dialogue with the DGs in charge of climate migration."

To improve the balance of the internal and external dimensions in the management of climate-driven migrations, at the end of 2013, the EU High Representative and the commission jointly indicated steps that the EU should collectively take towards a comprehensive approach in policy and action. This communication states that common actions should cover all stages of the cycle of conflict or other external crises: from early

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<sup>43</sup> On this lack of attention, see, as instance, Piguet, Etienne. 2008. "Climate change and forced migration." *New Issues in Refugee Research 153* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee. <http://www.unhcr.org/47a316182.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Kunz, Rachel, Sandra Lavenex and Marion Panizzon, 2011. *Multilayered migration governance: the promise of partnership*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>45</sup> MeP J. Lambert.

<sup>46</sup> On this, see Furness, Mark. 2011. "Who controls the European External Action Service? Agent autonomy in EU external relations." German Development Institute. [http://www.euce.org/eusa/2011/papers/5i\\_furness.pdf](http://www.euce.org/eusa/2011/papers/5i_furness.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Information collected on July 2014.

warning and preparedness, conflict prevention, crisis response, and management to early recovery, stabilization, and peace building. These actions would assist in helping countries get back on track towards sustainable long-term development. However, despite this strategy, it is not clear how the EEAS and the commission should cooperate to ensure strategic and operational coherence in external policy and strategy, including the internal impact of external policies.

Additionally, as observed by a source from IOM, the external dimension represents the leading element of the EU's action in the field of climate migrants, yet it remains insufficient because it continues to be dominated by internal EU considerations. These actions aim to contain or manage migratory and refugee flows into EU territory. This issue represents the main obstacle to including new forms of migration into the EU's external policy objectives, such as those caused by environmental degradation and climate change.

### 3. How the EU Works on the Ground with the Environment-Related Migratory Flows

#### 3.1 The EU's Action on the Ground

Even though the potential security implications of climate are increasingly recognized in the scientific community,<sup>48</sup> a broad reflection is still absent in putting together the issues of climate justice, humanitarian aid and EU external policy. As most environmental migration is likely to occur within the Global South, this part of the research aims to analyze EU external policy and humanitarian aid programs implemented in conflict-affected countries to handle environment-related migrations.

Which EU actions have been put in place to assist fragile and conflict prone countries or to host environment-related migratory flows? What should the EU do on the ground to adequately respond to the challenges posed by this kind of migration?

The EU is making progress in identifying the wide-ranging repercussions of climate change, but to date, there is no comprehensive strategy for managing the migratory flows related to climate-induced geopolitical instability in conflict-affected countries. The EEAS's Strategy for 2015 and Beyond,<sup>49</sup> recognizes the need to launch an innovative preventive action that holistically addresses the complex links between climate change, economic development, international security, and migration; however, efforts to better understand what the EU should do to face this challenge and how this nexus should operate in the field remain unsatisfactory.

Critically assessing the main achievements reached by the EU in this field, Young has observed that the "recognition of the link between climate change and conflict has not prompted any significant upgrade in EU conflict-prevention efforts nor has it led to qualitatively different approaches to conflict resolution that are directly tied to climate-

<sup>48</sup> See, as instance the studies of Depledge, Duncan and Tobin Feakin. 2012. "Climate Change and International Institutions: the Implications for Security." *Climate Policy*. 12(1): 73-84; Dupont, Alan. 2008. "The Strategic Implications of Climate Change." *Survival*. 50: 29-54.

<sup>49</sup> European Union External Action Service. March 26, 2013a. "EU Climate Diplomacy for 2015 and Beyond." [http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas\\_26062013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/docs/eeas_26062013_en.pdf).

related risk indicators”.<sup>50</sup> This point is indisputable given that the EU’s tangible actions to date remain limited to mere disaster response despite commitments towards the implementation of an early warning system expressly dedicated to climate-induced instability.

Many reasons explain this “ex-post” approach. Historically, Betsy observes both research and policy have separately addressed environment and international migration’s linkages with institutional transition and conflict or post-conflict dynamics.<sup>51</sup> This situation has existed since the beginning through the EU’s single-issue strategy. The recent advent of the comprehensive approach has not actually improved the EU’s propensity to plan effective interventions designed to understand and address the multi-directional and multi-causal relationships between climate change, environmental degradation, and its related long-term and short-term migration patterns.<sup>52</sup>

However, it is important to consider that the role of climate change, together with other conflict-generating mechanisms,<sup>53</sup> is not secondary, especially if viewed from the perspective of the preventive actions that the EU can enact in conflict-affected countries that produce or receive climate migrants. To date, none of the three Commission Directorates (DG Home, DG DEVCO nor DG ECHO), nor the EEAS delegations deployed in the field have in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon, nor do they strive to gather, compile, and make available information on the affected countries.<sup>54</sup> This partial knowledge negatively affects the possibility of providing effective support to the affected countries and population groups. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to implement programs and activities aimed at building the capacity of local governments and stakeholders in order to respond effectively to the challenges presented by climate change, environmental degradation, and migration nexus.

The slowness of European action on the ground probably results from the absence of a well-defined conflict prevention program at the EU level that also addresses environmental-related conflict. In 2001, the adoption of the EU Program for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts defined the main aspects of the EU conflict prevention rationale.<sup>55</sup> A decade later, the Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention still consider early warning and early action as priority areas to be further strengthened.<sup>56</sup> This scenario has also been confirmed by the EU-funded project *Initiative for Peace building—Early Warning*, which highlights the fact that the EU has no clear early warning system in its operational areas: “Most EU staff interviewed during the research - it has been observed - could not relate to nor felt part of

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<sup>50</sup> Youngs, Richard. May 2014. *Climate Change and EU Security Policy. An Unmet Challenge*. Carnegie Europe, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Hartmann, Betsy. 2009. "From Climate Refugees to Climate Conflict: who is taking the Heat for Global Warming?" In Salih, M. (ed.), *Climate Change and Sustainable Development: New Challenges for Poverty Reduction*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishers, 142-155.

<sup>52</sup> European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, December 11, 2013. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflicts and Crises." JOIN (2013) 30 final.

<sup>53</sup> Salehian, Idean and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (2006). "Refugee Flows and the Spread of civil war," *International Organization*, 60(2): 335–366.

<sup>54</sup> Information taken from informal talks with people deployed on the ground.

<sup>55</sup> Council of the European Union. June 7, 2001. "Draft European Union Program for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts." <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209537%202001%20REV%201>.

<sup>56</sup> Council of the European Union. June 20, 2011. "Council Conclusions on Conflict Prevention." [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/122911.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/122911.pdf).

an EU early warning system. There were also diverging views on the actual purpose of early warning systems".<sup>57</sup>

Findings like these suggest that the ineffectiveness of the EU's early warning system can be ascribed first to the absence of a shared strategy among the key actors of the EU's early warning system. Since 2011, together with the EC's Crisis Room, the EEAS's *Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Mediation Instruments Division* has tried to promote a joint prevention program. As confirmed by the key informants interviewed, efforts by the EU Joint Situation Centre and the EEAS delegations deployed in conflict-affected countries have been frustrated by difficulties in establishing a clear division of responsibilities and commitments regarding the management of environment-related conflicts.

Clearly, despite promises and expectations, the early warning system that should be the distinctive feature of EU strategy in conflict-affected areas seems more a declaration of intent than an achievement. To date, there are no European agencies able to predict likely migratory flows from different parts of the world resulting from climate change.

Additionally, analysis of the European Commission-managed Instrument for Stability<sup>58</sup> shows that Commission investments in climate security are modest, sporadic, and ineffective. While the Instruments for Stability (IfS) are conceived to support projects in crisis situations, the latest 2012 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability<sup>59</sup> makes only generic reference to climate-driven conflicts, merely indicating the relevance of pre- and post-crisis capacity and cooperation within the international community with regard to "natural resources and conflict minerals." In 2013, four million Euros of the instrument's total budget of twenty-four million Euros was allocated for "natural resources and conflict." The budget increase dedicated to natural resources could suggest that the Commission intends to increase its activities in climate-driven conflicts by enhancing its early warning and conflict prevention programs.

### 3.2 Climate Change, Migration and Conflict: Making Sense of the Interconnection

The abovementioned background presents the case for an analysis of the interconnection behind the EU's policy intervention based on a better understanding of the evidence. Despite the lack of reliable estimates from the EU regarding the degree of environmental migrations, it is clear that continuing and unexpected environmental changes are already causing significant population movements. Academics and international agencies estimate that there are currently several million environmental migrants, and this number will

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<sup>57</sup> Babaud Sébastien. August 20, 2012. "Towards an Effective EU Early Warning System."

<http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/comment/51-towards-an-effective-eu-early-warning-system>.

<sup>58</sup> With the launch of the IfS in 2007, the European Commission tried to intensify its work in the area of conflict prevention, crisis management, and peace building. Crisis response projects under the IfS focus on different issues, such as support for mediation, confidence building, and interim administrations; strengthening rule of law and transitional justice; and the role of natural resources in conflict. These activities can support situations of crisis or emerging crisis when timely financial help cannot be provided by other EU sources. The largest share of IfS funds were given to projects in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and the Balkans, followed by the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

<sup>59</sup> European Commission. 2013. "2012 Annual Report on the Instrument for Stability." [http://eeas.europa.eu/ifs/docs/ifs\\_annual\\_report\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/ifs/docs/ifs_annual_report_2012_en.pdf).

increase from twenty-five million to one billion environmental migrants by 2050, moving either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis.<sup>60</sup>

A special issue of *Forced Migration Review* claims that climate change can affect migration in three distinct ways:

First, the effects of warming and drying in some regions will reduce agricultural potential and undermine ecosystem services, such as clean water and fertile soil.

Second, the increase in extreme weather events - in particular, heavy precipitation and resulting flash or river floods in tropical regions - will affect ever more people and generate mass displacement.

Finally, sea-level rise will permanently destroy extensive and highly productive low-lying coastal areas that are home to millions of people who will have to relocate permanently.<sup>61</sup>

Among the climate change scenarios outlined above, two emerge as particularly significant in terms of their impacts on environmental migrants originating in conflict-affected countries.

- The first concerns the aggravation of droughts in less-developed areas. In the Sahel, for instance, entire populations have left an area to escape drought-induced famine. In these situations, migration is usually the last option, when all other survival strategies have failed.
- The second pertains to rising sea levels. Sea level rise is one of the consequences of global warming that scientists expect to determine mass migrations in the medium and long term. Unlike floods and droughts, this phenomenon is irreversible, leaving migration as the only coping strategy. Estimates from the Swiss Academia of Art and Science predict a rise in sea levels of about a half to one meter by the end of the century. Today, 150 million people worldwide live in areas less than one meter above sea level. Almost three quarters of the people under threat live in the deltas and estuaries of major rivers in Southeast Asia. In addition, rising sea levels will cause salt water to enter coastal groundwater bodies, making the water undrinkable and disrupting agricultural production in the areas affected.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> International Organization for Migration. 2009. "Migration, Environment and Climate Change. Assessing the Evidence." [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/migration\\_and\\_environment.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/migration_and_environment.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> Morton, Andrew, Philippe Boncour, and Frank Laczko. October 2008. "Human security policy challenges." *Forced Migration Review*. Climate Change and Displacement. Issue 31, 6, <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR31/05-07.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> Swiss Academia of Arts and Science. 2013. "Environmental Change and Migration in Developing Countries. Fact Sheet."



Raleigh observes, that these climatic factors are expected to intensify pre-existing problems, especially in developing and conflict-affected countries due to their structural difficulties in coping with and adapting to environmental distress.<sup>63</sup>

Against this background, the extent to which environmental change represents a factor in migration decisions has been questioned. Highlighting that climate factors are rarely the sole driver of population displacement, a number of scholars<sup>64</sup> have stressed the need to understand how one substantial determinant operates in combination with political, economic, and social dynamics. Barnett, for instance, has claimed that a “sensitive understanding of the way climate change may induce more migration in any particular place requires understanding the way it will interact with other factors, and ways these factors may change as climate change will have uneven impacts on even proximate social and ecological systems”.<sup>65</sup>

Others recognize that the direct causal links between climate change and migration can only be proven in exceptional cases, and, therefore, the concept of “forced climate migrant” should be questioned on a number of.<sup>66</sup>

Critically examining the potential displacement implications of climate migration, Hartmann has noted that “while climate change is likely to cause displacement, the extent of that displacement will not only depend on how much the temperature rises and affects sea levels, rainfall patterns and extreme weather, but also on the existence and effectiveness of adaptation measures that help individuals and communities cope with environmental stresses”.<sup>67</sup> Nowadays, Hartmann's point is a given. Both scholars and intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU, recognize that migration on a permanent or temporary basis, is and always has been one of the most important survival strategies adopted by people in the face of natural or human-induced disasters.<sup>68</sup> This trend is continually growing. According to the last Foresight Report, “Natural hazards displaced seventeen million people in 2009 and forty-two million in 2010”.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Raleigh, Clionadh. 2011. "The search for safety: The effects of conflict, poverty and ecological influences on migration in the developing world." *Global Environmental Change* 21: S82-S93.

<sup>64</sup> Swain, Ashok. 1996. "Environmental Migration and Conflict Dynamics: Focus on Developing Regions." *Third World Quarterly* 17(5): 959-973; Hartmann, Betsy. 2010. "Rethinking Climate Refugees and Climate Conflict: Rhetoric, Reality and the Politics of Policy Discourse." *Journal of International Development* 22: 233-246; Barnett, Jon. 2003. "Security and Climate Change." *Global Environmental Change* 13: 7-17.

<sup>65</sup> Barnett, Jon. 2003. "Security and Climate Change." *Global Environmental Change* 13: 7-17, 12.

<sup>66</sup> Black, Richard. 2001. "Environmental Refugees: Myth or Reality?" UNHCR, *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper 34. <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3ae6a0d00.pdf>; Castles, Stephen. 2002. "Environmental Change and Forced Migration: Making Sense of the Debate." UNHCR *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper 70. <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3de344fd9.pdf>; Bates, Diane C. 2002. "Environmental Refugees? Classifying Human Migrations Caused by Environmental Change." *Population and Environment* 23 (5): 465-477; Zetter, Roger. 2010. "Protecting People Displaced by Climate Change: Some Conceptual Challenges." In McAdam, J. (ed.), *Climate Change and Displacement in the Pacific: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Chapter 10. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

<sup>67</sup> Hartmann, Betsy. 2010. "Rethinking Climate Refugees and Climate Conflict: Rhetoric, Reality and the Politics of Policy Discourse." *Journal of International Development* 22: 233-246, 237.

<sup>68</sup> McLeman, Robert and Barry Smith. 2006. "Migration as an Adaptation to Climate Change." *Climatic Change* 76(1-2): 31-53. Perch-Nielsen, Sabine et al. 2008. "Exploring the link between climate change and migration." *Climatic Change* 91(3-4): 375-393. Tacoli, Cecilia. 2009. *Crisis or Adaptation? Migration and Climate Change in a Context of High Mobility*. *Environment and Urbanization* 21(2): 513-525.

<sup>69</sup> Foresight. 2011. "Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities, Final Project Report." London: The Government Office for Science, 9.

In developing regions, where economic systems and livelihoods are almost entirely based on agriculture and natural resources, extreme climatic events are especially accelerating the human mobility of those most vulnerable, such as landless laborers or tenant.<sup>70</sup> Analyzing the adaptation patterns of West African rural households to the seasonality of rainfall and frequency of droughts, McLeman has stressed how the great part of the rural-urban migratory flows start out as seasonal: "Many rural inhabitants migrate to the city each year during the annual dry season, their numbers increasing significantly during years of drought. When drought conditions persist for extended periods of time, as they often did in the last decades of the twentieth century, seasonal migration becomes more permanent".<sup>71</sup>

This fact confirms that, while climate change is likely to cause migration, the extent of that mobility will depend not only on environmental degradation related to climate change, but also on the existence and effectiveness of adaptation measures that help communities cope with environmental stresses. Far from being a failure to adapt to a changing environment, migration can represent a logical and strategic livelihood diversification and adaptation strategy.

Additionally, the relationship between environmental change and migration is often complicated by associations with other individual or contextual factors, such as personal expectations, human security, governance, conflict, population growth and poverty. Analyzing the impact of desertification on migration patterns in the northeastern Ethiopian highlands, Morrissey<sup>72</sup> found that people's decisions regarding whether to migrate were mediated by both structural and individual factors. These factors included the potential for livelihood diversification within rural areas as well as individual opportunities and connections in urban areas.

Political stability can similarly intertwine with environmental drivers of migration. Since violent conflicts have emerged in a number of sub-Saharan African states, specialists have widely debated whether climate change migration could generate or aggravate existing instability and conflict in less-developed countries, which have weak state structures and very limited governance capacities.<sup>73</sup>

The most frequently discussed scenarios involve climate change causing resource scarcity, which shifts to violent conflict, or resource scarcity resulting in migration that leads to conflict in sending, transiting, or receiving areas. However, despite the belief of the majority of authors that climate change may well result in increased conflict, this "predictive reasoning approach"<sup>74</sup> is disputed.<sup>75</sup> While climate change may well result in increased

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<sup>70</sup> On this topic see the analysis of Hunter, Lori M. 2005. Migration and Environmental Hazards. *Population and Environment* 26(4): 273–302; McLeman Robert and Lori M. Hunter. 2010. "Migration in the Context of Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change: Insights from Analogues." *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 1(3): 450–461.

<sup>71</sup> International Organization for Migration. 2011. "Climate Change, Migration and Critical International Security Considerations." 22, <http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MRS42.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup> Morrissey, James. 2008. "Rural-Urban Migration in Ethiopia." *Forced Migration Review* 31: 28–29.

<sup>73</sup> Baechler Günther. 1999. "Environmental Degradation in the South as a Cause of Armed Conflict." In Carius, A. and K. Lietzmann (eds.). *Environmental Change and Security: A European Perspective*. Berlin: Springer; Barnett, Jon and Neil W. Adger. 2007. "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict." *Political Geography* 26(6): 639–655; McDonald, Matt 2013. "Discourse of Climate Security." *Political Geography* 33: 42–51.

<sup>74</sup> Definition from Gemenne, Françoise. 2011. "Why the Numbers Don't Add Up: A Review of Estimates and Predictions of People Displaced by Environmental Changes." *Global Environmental Change* 21(S1): 41–49.

conflict, this path is anything but predictable. Although analyses do identify a clear link between climate change, migration and conflict, climate change does appear, however, to be just one factor contributing to conflict, and is not necessarily the leading or most important reason.

Based on a comparative analysis of thirty-eight cases of environmentally-induced migration in the second half of the twentieth century, observed that conflict in receiving areas is more likely when environmental migration is combined with dynamics like native-migrant competition over resources, long-standing ethnic disputes between migrants and residents, distrust between the area of migration's origin and the host area, and socio-economic fault lines between migrants and natives competing over lands or jobs.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, despite migration possibly representing the key way to build adaptive capacity and household resilience,<sup>77</sup> this strategy is neither affordable nor feasible for all. Studies indicate that very few environmental disasters inevitably lead to migration. Affected populations can devise adaptation and mitigation strategies, sometimes grounded on their traditional knowledge, which permits them to extensively reduce the pressure to leave. A recent study argues that "migration is expensive and requires significant capital to finance, yet populations who experience the impacts of environmental change may see a reduction in the very capital required to enable a move".<sup>78</sup> This factor implies that when an environmental change occurs, the most vulnerable people have no option other than short-distance migration and regional or internal displacement.

### 3.3 DG Echo: A key Actor for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation?

As described above, most large-scale human displacement for environmental reasons takes place at the intrastate or regional level, which poses different political and humanitarian challenges for the EU, especially if one considers that "unplanned, unpredictable and concentrated movements of people are more likely in scenarios of the future characterized by high global growth, but fragmented social, political and economic governance".<sup>79</sup> Against this background, this part of the paper will specifically consider EU programs implemented in climate-affected countries. This analysis aims to assess if the existing EU external and humanitarian strategy is adequate to respond to the challenges of multi-victimized climate migrants that originate or are hosted by conflict-affected countries.

Principally through its DG ECHO, the European Commission has taken the lead in formulating EU humanitarian policy and in managing humanitarian aid for the victims of climate change and natural disasters in conflict-affected and developing countries. Since July 2012, according to IOM and Commission informants, DG ECHO has formally strengthened its

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<sup>75</sup> See, as instance, the analysis from Barnett, Jon and Neil W. Adger. 2007. "Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict." *Political Geography* 26(6): 639–655.

<sup>76</sup> Reuveny, Rafael. 2007. "Climate Change Induced Migration and Violent Conflict." *Political Geography* 26: 656–673, 668.

<sup>77</sup> Adger, Neil W. et al. 2002. *Migration, Remittances, Livelihood Trajectories and Social Resilience*. *Ambio* 31(4), 358–366.

<sup>78</sup> Foresight. 2011. "Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities, Final Project Report." London: The Government Office for Science, 104.

<sup>79</sup> Foresight. 2011. "Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities, Final Project Report." London: The Government Office for Science, 15.

partnership with the International Organization for Migration to enhance collaboration on migration, development and humanitarian response, as well as to establish a framework for providing assistance in countries affected by slow-onset climate-related emergency, such as drought or cyclical hazard events.

Since the launch of the EU-IOM Strategic Partnership,<sup>80</sup> the IOM has become the key partner to DG ECHO in the formulation and implementation of the National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs)<sup>81</sup> for climate-affected countries. Although these policy documents have been conceived to broadly address adaptation mechanisms for climate change, they only occasionally make reference to climate-induced migration. Geddes and Somerville, for instance, claim that “NAPAs tend to include brief summaries of patterns of migration concerns over natural disaster leading to people movement, and references to people’s displacement as a result of development projects. The adaptation policies and projects within these strategies implicitly or explicitly aim at reducing the pressures in particular geographical area in order to decrease outmigration from those areas”.<sup>82</sup>

Similar results were seen in an assessment from *Migrating out of Poverty*,<sup>83</sup> a research consortium funded by the UK’s Department for International Development, whose findings proved that “the adaptation projects proposed in NAPAs that mention autonomous forms of migration, are generally concerned with eliminating or reducing the need for these flows”.<sup>84</sup> Remarkably, almost one-third of the NAPAs (13 of 45) contained policies aimed at limiting rural out-migration, and nine countries addressed issues related to pastoralist migration, which for the most part were designed to limit the need for this type of migration.<sup>85</sup> Overall, these findings demonstrate that most programs for managing displacement resulting from slow-onset disasters remain in their infancy; only a few “NAPAs focus on migration as an explicit adaptation process in its own right, either to help preserve fragile ecosystems by reducing population pressures or to protect populations affected by natural disasters or rising sea levels, and where resettlement is referenced, there is little detail as to how it will be accomplished”.<sup>86</sup>

Even in the case of rapid-onset disasters, such as floods, tsunamis or storms, few EU programs focus on migration as an explicit adaptation process to protect affected

<sup>80</sup> See also “Working with the International Organization for Migration”, accessed January 21, 2015, [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un\\_geneva/eu\\_un\\_geneva/migration\\_asylum/iom/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un_geneva/eu_un_geneva/migration_asylum/iom/index_en.htm).

<sup>81</sup> NAPAs policy process provide least developed countries with an opportunity to create national climate change adaptation strategies that are country-driven and identify priority projects to be implemented in the immediate future. See more at “National Adaptation Programmes of Actions”, accessed January 21, 2015, [http://unfccc.int/adaptation/workstreams/national\\_adaptation\\_programmes\\_of\\_action/items/2679.php](http://unfccc.int/adaptation/workstreams/national_adaptation_programmes_of_action/items/2679.php) and at “Migration and Climate Change”, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://eea.iom.int/index.php/what-we-do/migration-climate-and-environment>.

<sup>82</sup> Geddes, Andrew and Somerville, James. May 2013. “Migration and Environmental Change: Assessing the Developing European Approach”. Policy Brief Series (2). Migration Policy Institute, 8.

<sup>83</sup> See “Migrating out of Poverty”, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk>.

<sup>84</sup> Sward, John. 2012. “Migration in National Adaptation Plans of Action.” *Migrating out of Poverty*. Briefing Paper No. 2, 3, <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/files/file.php?name=napas-bp-15-mar-2012.pdf&site=354>.

<sup>85</sup> On this point see Sward, John. 2012. “Migration in National Adaptation Plans of Action.” *Migrating out of Poverty*. Briefing Paper No. 2. <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/files/file.php?name=napas-bp-15-mar-2012.pdf&site=354>.

<sup>86</sup> Martin, Susan F. June 2010. “Climate Change, Migration and Adaptation.” The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 7, <https://www.ehs.unu.edu/file/get/7106>; International Organization for Migration. 2009. “Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental Migration: A Policy Perspective”. Geneva: IOM, 378.

populations. However, disasters that develop rapidly or are triggered suddenly, such as floods, leave little room for choice in terms of whether to displace. The magnitude of such disasters can be seen from these figures: “In 2012, an estimated 32.4 million people in 82 countries were newly displaced by disasters associated with natural hazard events. Over five years from 2008 to 2012, around 144 million people were forced from their homes in 125 countries. Around three-quarters of these countries were affected by multiple disaster-induced displacement. The vast majority of this displacement (98 per cent in 2012, 83 per cent over five years) was triggered by climate and weather related hazards such as floods, storms and wildfires”.<sup>87</sup>

In the EU, an emergency response framework specifically designed to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable victims of this kind of sudden-onset disaster already exists. The source from IOM references this framework frequently, noting that DG ECHO’s action is supported and complemented by Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR) and resilience-building activities, which feature an approach designed to take into account medium- to long-term visions.

Recently, following the release of the “EU Strategy for Supporting DRR in Developing Countries,”<sup>88</sup> the concepts and practices of DDR promoted by the EU have evolved considerably, and have progressively recognized the nature of climate change as introducing new humanitarian needs. Accordingly, the latest Annual Strategy for the Humanitarian Aid stressed that “for natural disasters, an average of 269 million people is reported as affected each year, and projections for climate-related natural disasters alone—thus excluding events such as earthquakes—show this rising to as much as 375 million by 2015.”<sup>89</sup> This recognition has also prioritized the goal of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) that today is addressed together with DDR. In the last decade, DG ECHO has progressively increased its involvement in DRR, devoting approximately sixteen percent of its humanitarian budget to DRR activities while developing DRR policy guidelines to guide implementation partners.<sup>90</sup>

Since 1996, the core element of ECHO's DRR global efforts has been the Disaster Preparedness ECHO Program (DIPECHO). Defined by the EU as a “people-oriented program,” DIPECHO’s declared goal has been to increase the resilience of local communities in order to reduce their vulnerability. Through its programs, communities at risk of natural disasters are able to better prepare themselves to face environmental hazards by undertaking training and establishing or improving local early warning systems and contingency planning. Based on the results of its integrated humanitarian and food needs assessment, DIPECHO has planned its recent humanitarian interventions in eight disaster-prone regions: the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, South East Africa, Southwest Indian Ocean, and Pacific Region.

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<sup>87</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, Norwegian Refugee Council. 2013. Global estimates 2012. People Displaced by Disasters , 6, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/global-estimates-2012-may2013.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> European Commission. February 23, 2009. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries. [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/environment/civil\\_protection/ah0002\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/civil_protection/ah0002_en.htm).

<sup>89</sup> European Commission. 2013. Annual Strategy for Humanitarian Aid in 2014, 4, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/strategy\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/strategy_2014_en.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> Channel Research. May 16, 2012. "Need Analysis, Review and Design of DG ECHO's Training in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation." [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/evaluation/2012/DRR\\_ClimateChange.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/evaluation/2012/DRR_ClimateChange.pdf).

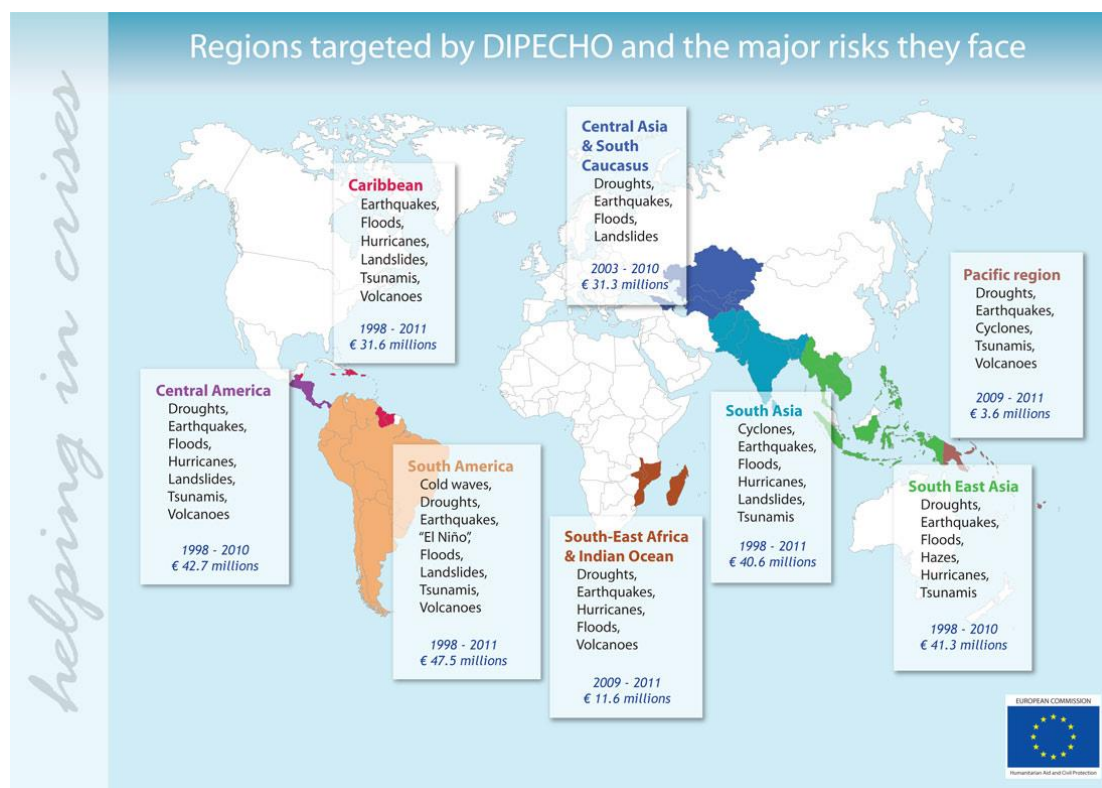


Figure 1. Regions targeted by DIPECHO and the major risks they face. Source: DG ECHO, 2014

In the last decade, more than seventy-eight million Euros have been provided for the 319 projects implemented in these areas,<sup>91</sup> aimed at enhancing the regional responses to emergencies, resilience and disaster risk reduction, whilst at the same time improving aid effectiveness. Conceived as pilot projects within their regions, these projects often have been managed in close cooperation with local aid agencies and NGOs.

According to a recent ex-post evaluation report, "There is clear evidence from evaluations and studies in many contexts that DIPECHO projects have had a positive impact, making communities safer: evacuation sites have provided safe shelter during hurricanes, cyclone resistant house have protected populations, early warning systems have triggered evacuations, trained intervention teams have provided rapid relief, etc".<sup>92</sup>

Notwithstanding these results, evidence from other ex-post evaluation reports commissioned and made public by DG ECHO suggest that these outcomes can be enhanced. Most DIPECHO evaluations<sup>93</sup> indicate that the implementation of DDR related to climate change has occurred without a structured policy framework or well-conceived DDR training

<sup>91</sup> Out of which twenty million Euros was for seventy-nine projects in South East Asia. Data from the European Commission.

<sup>92</sup> Grünwald, François, Mitzi, Donna, Latour Lagdameo A., Ocharan, Jacobo. 2013. Study Report Dipecho Study: Lessons Learned for an Improved Strategy and Approach. Inspire Consortium. Humanitarian Policy for Action, 3.

<sup>93</sup> See "DG ECHO's archive" accessed January 21, 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/funding-evaluations/evaluations/thematic-evaluations>.

program for ECHO staff deployed on the ground. Additionally, many of the climatic conflict scenarios faced by DG ECHO have been addressed without planning long-term interventions that take into account the specific and different vulnerabilities of each case managed. Again, most of the programs devoted to DDR and climate change adaptation in the target countries have been developed without taking into account the full range of risks faced by the target communities, and this oversight has often resulted in an inconsistent risk analysis with unhelpful impacts on the implemented risk reduction programs.

For example, DIPECHO's First Action Plan for the Andean Community<sup>94</sup> was a program implemented in the Andean region beginning in 2001 to improve environmental disaster management through preparedness training, institutional strengthening, and pilot prevention measures for vulnerable urban and rural communities, municipal agencies, and local disaster-related agencies. The ex-post evaluation of this project<sup>95</sup> found that the seventeen pilot projects funded through this plan were isolated, geographically dispersed, and disparate in terms of objectives, local partners, and types of activities. Evaluators also found poor coherence with other EU programs, especially those managed by DG-DEVCO and Europe-Aid. No coordination between DIPECHO and development services was found, and there was no effective dialogue between the disaster preparedness projects and policies of DIPECHO and local government evaluators. Interviewed sources stressed that DG DEVCO was generally not interested in DIPECHO projects because they were not focused on development.

An additional important point for reflection concerns how DIPECHO programs interact with the governance of the affected countries. The lack of good governance represents a crucial issue in most DIPECHO-focal countries and is one of the reasons that national coping mechanisms are so weak and risks so comparatively high. This issue becomes apparent in the outcomes of the DIPECHO Action Plan implemented in South East Africa and South West Indian Ocean Region<sup>96</sup> since 2008. To properly address human displacement due to environmental hazards in the region, the EU has to integrate its disaster preparedness and response mechanisms with appropriate tools to impact affected countries' governance settings. Unequal development, conflicts, and poor governance weaken the resilience of local communities and adversely affect their environment, making it difficult to withstand the impacts of hazards and slowing the normalization process.

Against this background, it is evident that succeeding in a conflict-prone or weak state requires DG ECHO to elaborate on common resilience strategies at the country/region level with DRR and other institutional actors such as DEVCO and EEAS. Despite the EU stating the need to overcome the gap between long-term development efforts and sudden humanitarian response in 2009,<sup>97</sup> to date, few concrete results have been achieved due to

<sup>94</sup> DG ECHO. February 13, 2012. "Humanitarian Aid Decision." European Commission.

<sup>95</sup> Alnap. 2001. "Evaluation of 11 ECHO Operations in the frame of the First DIPECHO Action Plan for the Andean Community." Alnap. <http://www.alnap.org/resource/2975>.

<sup>96</sup> Fourteen country-level DRR projects are being implemented in Madagascar, Malawi, and Mozambique. The implementing partners involved in DIPECHO are as follows: in Madagascar: Madagascar CARE, Madagascar ICCO/SAF, Medair, and Médecins du Monde; in Malawi: Christian Aid/Evangelical Association of Malawi, COOPI, and GOAL Malawi; and in Mozambique: Concern Worldwide, OIKOS, UN Habitat, and Welthungerhilfe. CARE, COOPI, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UN-HABITAT had mandates as regional coordinators according to their areas of expertise.

<sup>97</sup> European Commission. February 23, 2009. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries. [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/environment/civil\\_protection/ah0002\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/civil_protection/ah0002_en.htm).

the weakness of the EEAS and its services in shaping a targeted foreign policy for conflict-affected countries interested by environment-related migrations.

The European Union can overcome these problems by capitalizing on the good work already done and by recognizing the benefits of a common EU policy concerning environmental migrations in conflict settings. Therefore, the EEAS should try to embed Member States' single foreign policies into a larger strategic perspective. This perspective would be beneficial in mainstreaming DDR goals and climate change adaptation in all EU policies and programs dedicated to conflict-affected countries, especially in light of the declared revision to the UN Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015.

If EU external relations are reoriented toward this type of longer-term structural change, the EU foreign policy chief could promote a new season of cooperation among EC's services. Considering that planned and well-managed migration can reduce the chance of conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, the alignment between development and humanitarian approaches could impact the complex interactions of drivers leading to environment-related migratory flows.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This critical review has considered the EU's primary policies, programs, and governance structure concerning environmental migrants who originate or are hosted by conflict-affected countries. This phenomenon represents an important challenge both for the current EU's system of governance and for the EU's external and humanitarian action on the ground.

Through this analysis, it has been shown how and why the current EU structure of governance, which emphasizes the unilateral management of tasks assigned to the EC's services, falls short in addressing the different dimensions of environmental risk and conflict experienced by environmental migrants. Accordingly, research has substantiated the fact that the EU's current political and diplomatic position has downplayed the importance of these environmental migrations; the EU's approach has resulted in an unclear and ineffective response to these kinds of humanitarian concerns. To make this argument, I demonstrated that, while EU funded research and policy papers on climate migration abound, no specific policy addresses the topic of multi-victimized environmental migrants.

This issue is all the more relevant if one examines the EU's action on the ground. As previously discussed, DG ECHO is to date the key EU actor in charge of disaster risk reduction related to the environmental disasters; however, it is still unable to comprehensively address the different elements that ultimately affect migrants' long-term perceived sense of safety, peace, and justice. These significant gaps in the EU's framework for climate action require a new approach to improve policy coherence, especially in relation to the environmental displacement that takes place in conflict-affected countries. As Baldwin and Gemenne have emphasized, there is a "need to better understand how environmental migration overlaps with the issue of governance, development, security, and risk



management,”<sup>98</sup> and they call for a comprehensive approach in research, policy and practice.

Based on the political and institutional frameworks analyzed, as well as the criticalities apparent from the programs implemented on the field, the following recommendations to European policymakers can be made regarding priority areas of political interest for the EU, instances where further policy action is needed to overcome the identified gaps.

1. As described in paragraph 2.1, the EU’s policies and structure of governance has been limited mainly to inter-institutional dialogue regarding climate migration. Similarly, at the parliamentary level, there is no significant political support for the issue of climate migration, except for the Greens and SD Parties. This situation calls for the enhancement of effective cooperation among the DGs in charge of climate change, migration policy, humanitarian aid and development.
2. Specific attention should be devoted to the role played by DG Clima. Since its establishment in 2010, its main mandate is to lead international negotiations on climate change and to implement the EU Emissions Trading System. Regrettably, as shown by the EU’s agreement reached on October 23 and 24, 2014,<sup>99</sup> the policy approach of DG Clima continues to be dominated by arguments over energy savings and climate policy, leaving little room for other areas of climate policy-making, such as those related to human mobility. To enhance coherence within the EU climate diplomacy mechanism, a comprehensive effort at EU level is required to mainstream the question of environmentally induced migration in each of the concerned DGs (Home, DEVCO, ECHO and Clima). This alignment should also help to complement the current energy-centered perspective with a more comprehensive policy approach, based on a better understanding of the impact of climate change on the Global South and on a better planning of the actions required to mitigate and adapt to the effects of environmental change on migration in the affected countries.
3. As migrations related to both sudden and slow-onset events are likely to be predominantly in the Global South, at the internal or regional level, the primary responsibility for addressing the needs of climate-affected displaced populations is properly assigned to DG DEVCO and DG ECHO. These Directorates need to cooperate in order to take targeted and effective action on the ground. They also should take into account that different kinds of environmental degradation processes may cause different types of migration with varying implications for the aid and policy instruments to be put into action. In the early and intermediate stages of environmental degradation, migration may in fact be a rational and rightful

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<sup>98</sup> Baldwin, Andrew and Françoise Gemenne. 2013. "The Paradox of Climate Change and Migration, World Science Report 2013." In Unesco. 2013. World Social Sciences Report, pp. 265–268, 265.

<sup>99</sup> European Council, 23 October 2014. "2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework." [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145356.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145356.pdf) .

option characterized by temporary, circular and seasonal patterns. In the case of severe or irreversible environmental degradation, migration can become permanent and may entail relocation of affected populations, either internally or in another country.

4. The international dimension of environmental migratory flows expressly calls for the unmet needs on the side of the EU External Action. It is obvious that the EU lacks a strong common foreign policy on environmental migrations, because the Member States have not permitted one to emerge. Nonetheless, there is a significant potential for the EEAS to support adaptation responses in climate-affected countries through efforts to improve political stability and governance consolidation. In this sense, a more proactive foreign and cooperation policy is imperative, especially in understanding how cumulative vulnerabilities can interact in determining mechanisms of displacement that might take place not only in response to environmental change, but also because of a complex mix of factors related to state weaknesses or other risk factors.
5. Additionally, the intensity of the humanitarian concerns related to the impact of climate change in conflict-affected countries calls for an immediate joint action from DG Home and EEAS, endorsing migration as a rightful adaptation strategy. Measures “may comprise strengthening the adaptation and resilience capacities of third countries to reduce the vulnerability of affected populations and enhancing the protection of environmentally displaced individuals outside the European Union. The EU should consider providing support to local governments to address migration as an adaptation strategy and to facilitate migration while ensuring that the human rights of the migrants are protected during the whole migration cycle”<sup>100</sup>. As Youngs notes,<sup>101</sup> this situation again calls for the definition of an effective EU common climate foreign policy that is able to identify the structural causes of environmental migrations in terms of social, economic and political exclusion, as well as grievances and inequalities.
6. Considering that, the most important push factors for environmental displacement are sea-level rise, higher temperatures and drought, and the increasing harshness of storms, DG ECHO needs to develop targeted policies and programs for each of the world's affected areas. To enhance the EU's geopolitical role in affected areas, such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Andean region, and Southeast Asia, the role of development cooperation and the EEAS is essential, especially if the final aim is to promote policies that foster the long-term resilience of the affected communities.

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<sup>100</sup> Kraler, Albert, Tatiana Cernei and Marion Noack. 2012. "Climate Change & Migration: What is the Role for Migration Policies?" International Center for Migration Policy Development Policy Brief, 7, [http://oppenheimer.mcgill.ca/IMG/pdf/ICMPD\\_-\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_-\\_Climate\\_Refugees\\_May\\_2012.pdf](http://oppenheimer.mcgill.ca/IMG/pdf/ICMPD_-_Policy_Brief_-_Climate_Refugees_May_2012.pdf) .

<sup>101</sup> Youngs, Richard. May 2014. Climate Change and EU Security Policy. An Unmet Challenge. Carnegie Europe.

Overall, the EU has so far taken action in an essentially reactive manner, responding to frequent humanitarian crises due to environmental disasters and assisting developing countries through an ex-post intervention strategy. Nonetheless, there is now room for a successful change of course. In moving toward this new coherent policy framework, the EU should take into account the negligence of the past and promote targeted strategies that aim to strengthen the EU's role in the global arena. Doing so requires new policy tools. If the EU chooses action over talk, it could reassert itself in global discussions by kicking off a long-term climate policy response. This goal is achievable only if the EU recognizes the role of migration in the comprehensive framework of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. As noted by Foresight,<sup>102</sup> migration should not be omitted when these strategies are developed. Instead, this issue should be integrated into existing humanitarian policy practices, guidelines and forecasts that recognize early action and planning to be critical elements of a comprehensive approach.

Obviously, this policy-making process requires participatory mechanisms to better determine what individuals and communities perceive as climatic security threats and to determine what is needed in order for them to feel secure. As stressed by Des Gasper,<sup>103</sup> the human security approach can provide a comprehensive framework to approach multi-victimized communities and to address the threats and causes of environmental migration. Using a context-specific approach, human security can become a fundamental tool in identifying prevention-oriented solutions for vulnerable persons. The EU needs to look not only at environmental security, but also at individual, community and political security.

While the importance of local ownership has already been emphasized in the EU policy discourse, EU-centric strategies that intentionally or unintentionally exclude the affected communities from policy-making are still the norm. To tackle this problem, there are a few key issues to be addressed: coordination with development actors, mainstreaming of DRR activities in emergency response and development aid, and improved local capacities of EU partners and national structures in disaster-prone countries. One thing is certain: the EU cannot afford to continue a policy of ambiguity, which has bred uncertainty while affecting its international credibility.

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<sup>102</sup> Foresight. 2011. "Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change Future Challenges and Opportunities, Final Project Report." London: The Government Office for Science

<sup>103</sup> Author's interview, August 2014.

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