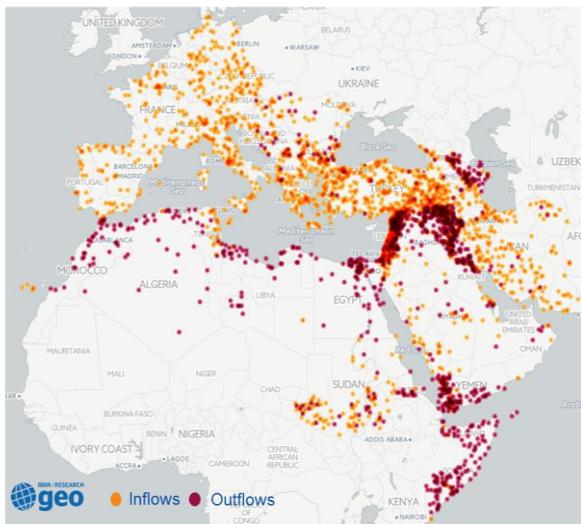


Global Hot Topics

The Refugee Crisis: Challenges for Europe

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The Middle East and North Africa region are facing complex and multiple emergency situations that are posing important humanitarian challenges for Europe. The significant influx of refugees has introduced some security problems which could reshape migration European policies looking for a more coordinated response. Especially worrisome is the situation in Syria, which leads more than 3.5 millions of people to fled to neighboring countries (Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan) and to Europe.

BBVA Research Refugees Flows Map (Jan 14 to Jun 15)
 (Number of media citations about refugees' inflows and outflows)
Source: www.gdelt.org & BBVA Research

The migrant problems in the “South” ...

Europe is facing its most serious migration crisis since the end of the Second World War. The massive refugee influx fleeing turmoil in Africa and the Middle East has greatly increased during last year, introducing complex challenges for Europe. There are several reasons why migrants through the Mediterranean Sea have increased dramatically:

- The **post-Arab Spring** social instability, human rights' violation and security problems have increased notably the migrant flows from North Africa.
- The **fall of some of the Dictatorship** (i.e Libya, Tunisia), which was a backstop for Sub-Saharan African migrants, has disappeared, fostering the flow of migrants from these countries.
- The **ISIS advance in Syria and Iraq and the recent proxy war in Yemen** have triggered a massive flow of migrants to neighbouring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia), and from then to Europe.
- The conflict in the **Caucasus is complicating further the security situation.**

... would prompt serious challenges in the “North”

Migration's flows are already generating problems through the Mediterranean countries, particularly in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Spain. However, these countries are not the only final destination and some of them move on to central and northern Europe. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, **more than 100,000 migrants had reached southern Europe** since the beginning of 2015 (to early June). The **largest migrant group** by nationality in 2015 is the **Syrians** (more than 8.800 people), **followed by** migrants from **Eritrea** (around 3.300 people) and **Somalia** (more than 2.900 people).

The refugee problem derived from Syrian war continues extremely challenging, particularly in the region. More than **three and a half million of Syrian people migrate** to other countries, **especially** to neighboring countries, such as **Turkey** (more than 1.77 million people), **Lebanon** (near 1.17 million people), and **Jordan** (almost 630.000 people). The **deteriorating security situation in Iraq**, has also triggered the **displacement of more than 1.8 million people**. Besides, **Yemen** continues to face a complex humanitarian situation given the ongoing insecurity, persistent conflicts and the extreme poverty situation, leading to population's **outflows of more than 334,000 people**.

Summing Up

Despite the attention is placed in other issues (The Greek Crisis and the Ukrainian-Russian conflict), the significant influx of refugees in Europe could have important demographic, ethnic, economic and security consequences in the region. The refugee crisis is not a minor issue and can reinforce some of the existing social and economic problems. The combination of low growth and massive flows of migrants could trigger social unrest and reinforce the incipient populism and fragmentation between Northern and Southern countries in Europe. Defining a more comprehensive and coordinated EU action plan to the migration crisis is urgent and crucial to avoid further economic and social consequences.

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