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*Laboratory for Black
Sea and Mediterranean
Studies*



Call for papers: International Conference on the routes, impacts and policies connected to the current mass migratory movements and people on the move.

The Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Black Sea and Mediterranean Studies announces its first international conference about mass migration and people on the move, which will be held in Thessaloniki, on May 2020.

1) Background of the Theme of the conference

Since 2015, the condition of people on the move and of mass migratory movements has become—again— the epicenter of publicity mainly regarding asylum seekers’ and immigrants’ movements and the accelerating flows thereof that has been labeled as “refugee crisis”. The adoption of the term “crisis” has profound international and national consequences, at various levels. Matters of national and human security, of positive or negative economic and political implications, psycho- social impact both on the incoming populations, as well as on the population of the hosting countries have been raised continuously.

Nonetheless, several important aspects are missing.

First, a comprehensive analysis of the different consequences and aspects of this phenomenon; while its legal, economic, psycho-social and political aspects have been examined thoroughly, an analysis combining them is still under construction and surely in demand.

Second, while consequences on the receiving states have received significant attention, the effects on states from which refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants depart have been analyzed at a significantly lesser extent.

Third, we lack state policy analyses concerning the immigration – refugee issues. moreover, in several states, including Greece, no overall assessment of the efficacy of the NGOs, states policies and of the EU policies exists, regarding both emergency and integration policies.

Finally, existing studies usually do not cover the problem in historical depth, and often neglect previous experiences of states and populations which have dealt with similar situations in the past.

On the basis of the considerations above, we hope that our conference will contribute to elucidating such crucial issues in a multi-disciplinary, comparative and historical perspective.

2) Proposed structure of the conference:

The two-day conference will comprise of different sessions throughout each day, and also plenary discussions, preferably of an interdisciplinary nature. We propose to focus on subject matters of practical significance, without however compromising theory production and discussion. Indicatively, the thematic categories of the conference, which could break down into two or three specific agorae for each thematic, could include the following:

a. Revisiting semantics, terms, notions, and theories:

Here we will focus on theoretical approaches, as well as on the political and practical implications of vocabularies chosen when speaking about mass population movements, and of the particular aspects and issues that are being highlighted in each approach. We will try to overview and compare theories, connect dots, and pinpoint continuities and ruptures.

b. Current causes of mass population movements

Here we will address the impact of the aforementioned issues, ranging from interstate antagonisms to climate change, the gap between North and South, and the prevalent economic model, on the emergence and rises of migration and refugee flows and crises. We would like to discuss how did the Arab Spring and inter-state antagonisms influence refugee and immigration issues? How do environmental catastrophes, violations of human rights, civil liberties, and regime change policies determine routes of migration? What is the role of the state-centered and human-centered security approaches?

c. Consequences of current mass population movements for countries of origin

Here we will examine, in the short, middle, and long-term, the social impact of these movements on countries of origin, focusing on issues such as brain-drain, loss of human resources, material impact, as well as potential long-term benefits.

d. Consequences for receiving regions

Here we will assess the impact of migrant influxes to the receiving states and region, addressing issues such as the types and extent of positive economic impact on material and human resources, on innovation, on labor force, on social cohesion, and also possible new forms of social and cultural interaction, as well as fragmentations.

e. “Crisis narratives”, their political impact, and the role of journalism:

Here we will analyze “crisis narratives”. Why are refugee and migrant movements depicted as a crisis? What is the impact of the “crisis narrative” on the political landscape of receiving countries? What is the role of journalists in disclosing the truth and what has been the impact of fake news and social media? What “makes” the crisis: the influxes per se or reactions from within the receiving states? What has been the impact of the EU policies and legal regulations, on the crisis narrative?

f. Legal management of migratory movements

Here we will overview the main legal tools used in European countries in connection to international law precepts and instruments, as well as their practical implementation; the variety of administrative practices- official or unofficial- which despite playing a crucial role in the handling of the issue, still remain under- analyzed at a significant extent; the impact of administrative detention and its examination under the rule of law imperatives. In addition, the practice of judicial authorities when dealing with cases involving asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants of different ages and in different fields of law. Have the authorities managed to tackle in legal terms the issue effectively? How supportive and effective have the NGO’s actually been and what ethical dilemma do they face in their collaboration with the authorities?

g. Long- term strategies and policies on migration

How do we foresee the future of societies at either of the two ends of migration and refugee movements? What policies and institutions are required in order to plan long-term strategies of inclusion and how will they look like? What will be the impact in cities, in labor, in education, in social institutions etc.?

Depending on responses to our call for papers, the specific agorae will be determined.

3) Timetable:

- a. 30th of December, submission of abstracts;
- b. End of January, notifications to presenters;
- c. End of March submission of papers or of extended abstracts;
- d. May 8-9, 2020 conference.

4) Working Languages: English/ Greek

5) Abstracts must be sent to both of the following emails, under the theme “abstract for international conference for people on the move [name/surname]: vsamartz@econ.auth.gr; themis.tzimas@gmail.com;

The Conference is supported by the European Society of International Law-ESIL.