Negative: Blue Card Expansion

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The European Union should substantially reform its immigration policy.***

Blue Cards are an EU visa designed to attract highly skilled workers to immigrate. They don’t get a lot of use because they’re a lot of hassle and expensive, and not very attractive to foreign workers. AFF plan will reduce the cost and try to expand their use to improve EU’s economy by having more high-tech workers under the theory that the EU economy has “skilled labor shortages” and importing workers from outside is the solution, and that this would grow their economy. This brief challenges all of these assumptions, and also argues that even reformed Blue Cards wouldn’t significantly increase skilled workers in the EU. The shortages are exaggerated. Importing workers isn’t the solution (we should train Europeans better instead) and it won’t grow the economy.

VERY IMPORTANT: Evidence about Blue Cards (good or bad) must be checked for dates and applicability to what AFF is doing. AFF is running a plan to implement a Blue Card reform proposal that was developed in 2016, but never implemented. It’s not enough to read evidcnce that Status Quo Blue Cards don’t work – AFF will agree with that.
This NEG brief will show how Blue Cards won’t work EVEN IF the 2016 reform proposal is adopted. Disads 3-6 link to the reason why the 2016 reform was never adopted: It was too controversial and a lot of the EU member states didn’t like it. AFF can fiat that the EU adopts the reforms, but they can’t fiat that there will be no consequences nor can they fiat that everyone will like it. EU countries today like having their own individualized skilled-worker immigration policies, and the 2016 reform would make them give up individual policies in favor of the single uniform EU Blue Card policy. The backlash and anger it could generate will fracture the EU and lead to the disadvantages.

In addition to all this, there is also a process underway in Status Quo to “reform the reforms.” The EU is amending the 2016 reform proposal right now to come up with something better and fix its flaws. NEG can argue that we should wait for that process to finish. (Inherency #1 and would also prevent the disadvantages from happening by solving for the anger and backlash at being forced to accept the unpopular 2016 plan).

NOTE: All the evidence in this brief from Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 is from a study she did specifically examining the effects of what would happen if the 2016 Blue Card reforms were implemented.

NEG: Blue Card Expansion 4

INHERENCY 4

1. Status Quo is already working on a Blue Card policy better than AFF’s plan 4

The 2016 Blue Card policy (AFF’s plan) needs further corrections before it can be implemented. Status Quo is already making them and will implement the new Blue Card when it’s ready 4

2. Status Quo already improving worker skills 5

Link: European businesses say the policy solution THEY want is better education 5

Solution: Status Quo is doing it with the “New Skills Agenda.” It is successfully raising EU citizens’ skills today to fill jobs 5

3. New immigration policies in place at EU member level. Just give them time to work 6

EU member nations have introduced their own new skilled labor policies that will work, they just need some time 6

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 6

1. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #1: Low pay is the problem 6

A lot of the problem is low pay, not absence of workers. Oddly enough, employers with higher wages don’t report shortages! 6

European studies that factor out uncompetitive wage offers find “much lower” rate of labor “shortages” 6

Not all supposed European “worker shortages” are genuine. If they were, wages would be going up a lot faster 7

2. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #2: Multiple other factors besides “lack of skills” are the problem 7

Genuine skill shortages aren’t as bad as it seems: The real problem is that firms aren’t attracting the available workers due to other factors, in addition to low wages 7

3. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #3: Employers confusing “skills” for “experience” 7

Employers complaining about “lack of skills” are confusing lack of work experience for lack of skill 7

SOLVENCY 8

1. European welfare state blocks competitiveness for skilled workers 8

Blue Card can’t solve for the disincentives created by the European welfare state. Higher taxes in Europe drive high-earning workers more often to the US 8

High taxes to support the welfare state make take-home earnings of immigrants in the EU uncompetitive with US & Canada 8

2. EU diversity blocks effectiveness of Blue Card’s “uniform” approach 9

Ongoing diversity of EU member states on labor immigration will continue to block competitiveness for skilled workers 9

3. Housing costs 9

Can’t migrate to where the new jobs are because housing costs are too high (but Status Quo can solve in other ways) 9

4. No significant economic benefit 10

Research finds no consistent evidence of economic benefit to European economies from migrant workers 10

5. Doesn’t meet foreign workers’ needs 10

The 2016 reform proposal never consulted with workers to find out what THEY want. And sure enough, it doesn’t meet their needs 10

6. Language barriers make EU uncompetitive 11

Diversity of languages makes EU uncompetitive with English speaking countries for high-skill immigrants 11

7. Lack of standardized EU qualification system 12

Credentials and qualifications aren’t recognized across the EU, so “skilled” foreigners face obstacles having their skills accepted for job applications. This has to be fixed before EU can compete for high-skilled professionals 12

8. Salary threshold too high 13

AFF Plan (2016 reform proposal) lowers the salary threshold (minimum amount of money for the job to qualify for the Blue Card), but it’s not enough. It would still leave out many high-skilled workers 13

9. Racism & discrimination 14

Racism and discrimination keep high skilled immigrants out of upper level jobs 14

10. Insignificant results 14

The Blue Card reform proposal - even if it worked in a best-case scenario - isn’t ambitious enough to meet EU labor market needs or address shortages 14

Blue Card reform proposal is unlikely to address EU labor market shortages 15

DISADVANTAGES 15

1. Wasted talent 15

“High skill” immigrants often end up overqualified for the jobs they can get, and their talents are wasted 15

High-skill immigrants often have jobs where their skills are unused or under-used 16

2. Brain Drain 16

If Blue Card works and attracts skilled migrants from poor countries, it drains away the talent needed for their economic development. Impact: Poverty in Africa 16

Big Links to DA’s 3 through 6 – Fracturing / dividing / weakening the European Union 17

Link: Blue Card is “sensitive and politically charged” with “political deadlock” 17

Backup Link: Blue Card is a “politically sensitive topic” among EU members 17

Background / Reasons why: EU member nations really don’t want to give up their individual immigration schemes (But Blue Card reform would force them to) 🡪 If we wait for the additional reforms (Inherency #1), that problem will be solved 17

Reason Blue Card reform hasn’t happened yet is because it’s so controversial and member states don’t trust each other 18

Big Fracture Link & Brink: Stirring up controversy on immigration would be really bad. EU is on the brink of disintegration over it 18

3. Reduced world stability from fracturing the EU 19

Example: Disagreement over immigration policy was a major reason Britain left the EU 19

Brink: EU faces an uncertain future with multiple crises threatening unity and increasing division 19

Link: EU stability promotes US ability to maintain global security and stability 19

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk without US influence. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity 20

4. Populism and Authoritarian Government 21

Link: AFF plan weakens / fractures the EU 21

Link: Fear, anxiety and skepticism about the EU leads to the rise of populist authoritarian figures 21

Brink & Example: Hungary now has authoritarian government, putting EU at high risk right now 21

Link & Impact: Weak EU leads to rise of dictatorship and loss of freedom for millions more 21

5. Economic recession (from weakening / fracturing the EU) 22

Link: AFF plan weakens / fractures the EU with greater division 22

Link: EU unity is necessary for beneficial trade deals 22

Brink: Cracks already being seen in EU unity, and even partial non-cooperation will eventually bleed it to death 22

Impact: Devastating economic impact. Financial recession 22

Past precedent: Brexit caused serious economic damage 23

6. Russia gains influence 24

Link: AFF divides / weakens the EU 24

Link: Russia uses EU division to advance its agenda and gain influence to accomplish bad things 24

Impact: Russian influence damages democracy, promotes authoritarian rule 24

NEG: Blue Card Expansion

INHERENCY

1. Status Quo is already working on a Blue Card policy better than AFF’s plan

The 2016 Blue Card policy (AFF’s plan) needs further corrections before it can be implemented. Status Quo is already making them and will implement the new Blue Card when it’s ready

Schengen Visa Info News 2020. (news & research organization publishing information about the Schengen Agreement borderless travel area in Europe) 25 Sept 2020 “Skilled Migrants Would Have It Easier to Move to EU If New Migration Pact Is Approved” <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/skilled-migrants-would-have-it-easier-to-move-to-eu-if-new-migration-pact-is-approved/>

In mid-2016 the Commission presented a legislative proposal to reform the Blue Card scheme, with the intention to make it easier and attractive for highly skilled third-country nationals.

The reform has, however, not finalised yet. Through the new Pact on Migration, the Commission intends to complete the reform as soon as possible.

Revision of the Single Permit Directive

EU’s Since Permit Directive is a regulation that intends to establish an application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to live and work in the territory of a Member State and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State.

The Directive provides a set of common rights to be granted as equal treatment with nationals as regards working conditions, and access to certain social security benefits.

The Directive was established in 2016, but the Commission notes that there might be a need to consider putting forward legislative measures to tackle the inconsistencies, gaps and other shortcomings identified, in order to simplify, streamline, complete and generally improve EU legislation. Its revision has not been completed, but if the new Migration Pact is adopted quickly and without any quarrels between the member states, it may soon become effective.

2. Status Quo already improving worker skills

Link: European businesses say the policy solution THEY want is better education

**Analysis: European businesses advocate “train European workers better” rather than “import workers from elsewhere”**

Dr. Giorgio Brunello and Patricia Wruuck 2019. (Brunello – PhD; Professor of Economics at University of Padova. Wruuck - Economist in the Economics Dept of the European Investment Bank) May 2019 “Skill Shortages and Skill Mismatch in Europe: A Review of the Literature” <http://ftp.iza.org/dp12346.pdf> (brackets added)

The concerns that firms express about the limited availability of skills as a factor limiting corporate investment are reflected in their views about public policy priorities. When asked about the areas where the public sector should focus in the next three years, 24 percent of the respondents to the EIBIS [European Investment Bank Group Survey on Investment and Investment Finance] survey in 2017 chose professional training and higher education as a policy priority. By country, this share tends to be higher where concerns about skills are more pronounced (see Figure 11).

Solution: Status Quo is doing it with the “New Skills Agenda.” It is successfully raising EU citizens’ skills today to fill jobs

Terence Hogarth 2019 (with the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies Directorate-General for Internal Policies) Sept 2019 “Skills for the labour market: EU policies for VET and upskilling” [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/638431/IPOL\_BRI(2019)638431\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/638431/IPOL_BRI%282019%29638431_EN.pdf)

Of particular note within the New Skills Agenda is the Council Recommendation on the Upskilling Pathway. It is designed to assist the estimated 61 million people with low skills so that they can improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or increase their level of educational attainment to the upper secondary level (i.e. at levels 3 or 4 of the European Qualifications Framework). The Upskilling Pathway is built on the concept of providing: (1) a skills assessment to identify existing skills and upskilling needs; (2) a tailor-made offer of learning and mentoring, to enable them to update skills and fill important deficits; and (3) the opportunity to have their acquired knowledge and skills validated and recognised towards a qualification or access to employment. Early evidence from the Upskilling Pathway’s roll-out suggests that these types of programme have the capacity to raise skill levels, though to date the focus appears to have been on unemployed adults. A stronger focus, however, on supporting low skilled workers in employment who represent a significant share of the target group for the Upskilling Pathway is becoming evident. Evidence points to continuing progress being made in upskilling the workforce over the past few decades. For instance, the percentage of EU workers employed in relatively high skill occupations (such as managers, professionals and associate professionals) has increased: from 32 per cent in 1995 to 43 per cent in 2018. And the percentage of people with tertiary level qualifications has nearly doubled over the same period from 16 to 30 per cent. Nearly three quarters of the population are now qualified to at a level equivalent to completing upper secondary education.

3. New immigration policies in place at EU member level. Just give them time to work

EU member nations have introduced their own new skilled labor policies that will work, they just need some time

Metka Hercog & Anja Wiesbrock 2016. (Hercog - research associate at the Department for Cultural Studies and European ethnology, University of Basel. Wiesbrock - University Lecturer in European Law at Maastricht University) January 2016, Highly Skilled Migration to the European Union and the United States [https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190211394.001.0001/acprof-9780190211394-chapter-11](https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof%3Aoso/9780190211394.001.0001/acprof-9780190211394-chapter-11)

 Each EU country has recently introduced immigration policies that target skilled migrants. The analysis finds that these new policies are more favorable than they use to be toward high-skilled workers on eligibility criteria, special provision for young migrants, validity of permits and access to permanent residence, family migration options, employment rights, and social security provisions. The results also indicate that now, in many aspects, these countries are more favorable to high-skilled migrants than the United States. However, these policies are still works in progress, and as a result, the United States continues to be more attractive to high-skilled immigrants, and a more popular destination.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #1: Low pay is the problem

A lot of the problem is low pay, not absence of workers. Oddly enough, employers with higher wages don’t report shortages!

Dr. Giorgio Brunello and Patricia Wruuck 2019. (Brunello – PhD; Professor of Economics at the University of Padova. Wruuck - Economist in the Economics Department of the European Investment Bank) May 2019 “Skill Shortages and Skill Mismatch in Europe: A Review of the Literature” <http://ftp.iza.org/dp12346.pdf>

At the firm level, reported shortages and problems to fill vacancies could be due to the wage and working conditions being offered, workforce characteristics, or the effectiveness of the recruitment process, rather than to the lack of suitable candidates among job seekers. Establishments offering a higher average wage relative to the average wage for the same occupational group in a given area have been found to report fewer shortages (Haskel and Martin, 2001; Directorate General for Internal Policies, European Parliament, 2015). In addition, Monti and Pellizzari, 2016, have shown that the occupations where hiring was declared to be the most difficult in Italy in 2012 were not the ones where wages increased the most during the period 2012-15.

European studies that factor out uncompetitive wage offers find “much lower” rate of labor “shortages”

Dr. Giorgio Brunello and Patricia Wruuck 2019. (Brunello – PhD; Professor of Economics at University of Padova. Wruuck - Economist in the Economics Dept of European Investment Bank) May 2019 “Skill Shortages and Skill Mismatch in Europe: A Review of the Literature” <http://ftp.iza.org/dp12346.pdf> (brackets added)

In a series of studies, CEDEFOP [European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training], 2015, 2018, has attempted to separate “genuine” shortages, defined as recruitment bottlenecks that occur when firms offer competitive starting salaries to potential recruits, from reported shortages that originate from wage offers below competitive levels. Drawing on the Eurobarometer Flash Survey 304, these studies show that while 47 percent of interviewed firms report difficulties in recruiting graduates with suitable skills, the total proportion of employers facing genuine shortages is much lower at 34 percent (see McGuiness et al, 2017).

Not all supposed European “worker shortages” are genuine. If they were, wages would be going up a lot faster

Dr. Giorgio Brunello and Patricia Wruuck 2019. (Brunello – PhD; Professor of Economics at University of Padova. Wruuck - Economist in the Economics Dept of European Investment Bank) May 2019 “Skill Shortages and Skill Mismatch in Europe: A Review of the Literature” <http://ftp.iza.org/dp12346.pdf> (brackets added)

5. After the 2008 recession, labour shortages have increased in many European countries, yet real earnings growth has remained subdued, with the exception of Eastern Europe. This casts some doubts that all the declared shortages are genuine; 6. In the long run, the adoption of new technologies creates the demand for new skills that are not immediately available in the labour market, giving rise to skill shortages until the broad education system (including employer training) is able to meet the new skill requirements.

2. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #2: Multiple other factors besides “lack of skills” are the problem

Genuine skill shortages aren’t as bad as it seems: The real problem is that firms aren’t attracting the available workers due to other factors, in addition to low wages

European Center for the Development of Vocational Training 2015 (an agency of the European Union) Skill shortages and gaps in European enterprises (no month of publication was given, only the year 2015) <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3071_en.pdf>

The inability of firms to attract the ‘right’ workers and fill their vacancies may arise for many reasons other than genuine shortages of skill: unattractive wages, poor and precarious working conditions, lack of career prospects, geographic and other administrative barriers, such as lack of international recognition of qualifications. The key lesson to be drawn from this report is that many dynamic, internationally oriented EU companies, in specific economic sectors and in some Member States, face a genuine shortage of applicants with the right skills. This is concerning, given the evidence of lagging productivity and innovation in the EU relative to its major competitors in the global market. However, the share of EU firms faced with genuine skill shortages is smaller than one would believe solely on the basis of employer surveys. The evidence clearly shows that many EU firms face recruitment difficulties for reasons other than a generalised lack of skills in the European labour force.

3. “Skilled worker shortage” exaggerated #3: Employers confusing “skills” for “experience”

Employers complaining about “lack of skills” are confusing lack of work experience for lack of skill

**Analysis: There are plenty of workers who have the skills and would develop further on the job if only employers would hire them. But European firms look at someone and say “he has no experience” and then report that he is unskilled, which is not the same thing.**

 European Center for the Development of Vocational Training 2015 (an agency of the European Union) Skill shortages and gaps in European enterprises (no month of publication was given, only the year 2015) <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3071_en.pdf>

According to the talent shortage surveys, the reason most commonly cited by employers for struggling to fill their jobs is lack of technical competences (hard skills). The lack of available candidates, lack of work experience and soft skills follow in importance. Skilled trades positions tend to be the most difficult jobs to fill, followed by engineers and technicians, which emphasises that recurrent skill shortages reported by employers are often a reflection of deficits in vocational skills (ManpowerGroup, 2014) (10). Too often employers also confuse skill shortage with a general lack of work experience or of work readiness on the part of young labour market entrants. Work readiness covers the set of desirable attitudes and behaviours for the workplace (Hettich and Landrum, 2014) but such skills are often better acquired in work-based learning (such as apprenticeships), rather than in a school-based environment (Handel, 2005).

SOLVENCY

1. European welfare state blocks competitiveness for skilled workers

Blue Card can’t solve for the disincentives created by the European welfare state. Higher taxes in Europe drive high-earning workers more often to the US

Dr. Assaf Razin 2020 (PhD in economics; Professor of Public Economics at Tel-Aviv University) MIGRATION AND FISCAL EXTERNALITY: US VS. EUROPE, November 2020 <https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28126/w28126.pdf>

In addition, a generous welfare state may deter high-skilled migration because heavy redistributive taxes must perforce accompany them. Indeed, over the last half-century, Europe’s generous social benefits have encouraged a massive surge of “welfare migration”, that is, of low-skilled migrants. In contrast, at the same period, the US has attracted a major world portion of highly- skilled migrants, boosting its innovative edge. While in the last two decades Europe ended up with 85 percent of all low skilled migrants to developed countries, the US retains its innovative edge by attracting 55 percent of the world- educated migrants. European migration thus exhibits a bias towards low-skilled workers, whereas the US attracts the majority of the world’s skilled migrants.

High taxes to support the welfare state make take-home earnings of immigrants in the EU uncompetitive with US & Canada

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Europe continues to be characterised by progressive income taxes in combination with a generous

support system for families and individuals, which results in a relatively egalitarian system. However,

a skilled migrant would search for a destination that pays the best for his or her qualifications. Wage

premium is among the important factors he/she considers while choosing that destination. Table 5

demonstrates that the relative earnings of tertiary educated in the EU member states are as high as (or

higher than) in other traditional destinations. However, the mean monthly earnings are significantly

lower. Only seven among the twenty-one reported member states have wages higher than in Australia,

only one (Germany) higher than Canada and none higher than in the USA.

2. EU diversity blocks effectiveness of Blue Card’s “uniform” approach

Ongoing diversity of EU member states on labor immigration will continue to block competitiveness for skilled workers

Anja Wiesbrock 2016 (University Lecturer in European Law at Maastricht University) The Evolution of EU Migration Policies Toward a Balanced, Comprehensive, and Common Approach? January 2016 [https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190211394.001.0001/acprof-9780190211394-chapter-8](https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof%3Aoso/9780190211394.001.0001/acprof-9780190211394-chapter-8)

This chapter traces the development of European migration and asylum policies from the first guest-worker policies in the postwar period to the most recent initiatives focused on highly skilled migrants and the return of irregular migrants. It highlights that, in spite of the European Union’s ambition to develop a common European approach toward the entry and residence of non-EU nationals, rules on migration, asylum, refugees, and border control continue to be fragmented across EU nations and are far from EU-wide or comprehensive. As a result, the complex picture of inter-related European, national, and international norms not only decreases the attractiveness of Europe as a destination for migrant workers, it also challenges the European Union’s self-perception as a human rights guarantor by compromising migrants’ rights for the sake of appeasing European receiving populations.

3. Housing costs

Can’t migrate to where the new jobs are because housing costs are too high (but Status Quo can solve in other ways)

Sv[en Smit](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/sven-smit), [Tilman Tacke](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/tilman-tacke), [Susan Lund](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/susan-lund), [James Manyika](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/james-manyika), and Lea Thiel 2020 ([Sven Smit](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/sven-smit) is a co-chairman and director of the McKinsey Global Institute, where [**Tilman Tacke**](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/tilman-tacke) and [**Susan Lund**](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/susan-lund) are partners, and [**James Manyika**](https://www.mckinsey.com/our-people/james-manyika) is a co-chairman and director. **Lea Thiel** is a consultant in McKinsey’s Munich office ) 10 June 2020 “The future of work in Europe” [https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-in-europe#](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-in-europe)

To fulfill their growth potential, Europe’s dynamic growth cities will need to keep attracting an influx of new workers at roughly the same rate as in the past. Investing in transit infrastructure around major metropolitan areas to expand what constitutes a viable commute is one way to increase mobility. Addressing the [affordable housing](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-cities/housing-affordability-a-supply-side-tool-kit-for-cities) shortage in these fast-growing urban areas would enable people who do want to move for better opportunities to do so. Geographic mobility alone may not solve this issue. If workers cannot move to the jobs, the jobs may need to move to them. With remote work on the rise, employers can also hire remote workers or turn to freelancers and outsourcing to expand their talent pool.

4. No significant economic benefit

Research finds no consistent evidence of economic benefit to European economies from migrant workers

Margo Hoftijzer and Dr. Lucas Gortazar 2018 (Hoftijzer - Senior Economist in the Education Global Practice of the World Bank. Gortazar - PhD in economics; consultant for the Education Global Practice at the World Bank) May 2018 “Skills and Europe’s Labor Market How Technological Change and Other Drivers of Skill Demand and Supply are shaping Europe’s Labor market” <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/115971529687983521/EU-GU-Skills-and-Labor-Markets-final-5-29-2018.pdf>

In all EU countries, flexible forms of employment like temporary contracts are more prevalent among workers with lower levels of education. While temporary employment is preferred by some due to the flexibility it offers, it tends to lower the skills of the workforce population and risks exacerbating inequalities between regions and population groups (e.g. between workers with different ages, education levels and skills). Lastly, the effect of migration on labor market outcomes is complex, and a review of available research found no consistent pattern of the impacts of migrants on the local economies they work in. A broad conclusion from available evidence would be that, overall, the identified impact of migrant labor on the economy and job outcomes as a whole is relatively small, and can be either positive or negative.

5. Doesn’t meet foreign workers’ needs

The 2016 reform proposal never consulted with workers to find out what THEY want. And sure enough, it doesn’t meet their needs

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 (brackets added) <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Though the Blue Card is a demand-driven scheme, it is not designed to incentivise the employers to

hire highly-skilled TCNs [Third Country Nationals]. Rather, it is supposed to attract and retain them to address shortages in the labour market. However, the opinions of the (potential) Blue Card beneficiaries (for example,

regarding factors defining the choice/preferences between the Blue Card and national schemes) were

not taken into consideration in the reforms. They were not reflected either in the impact assessment

report, or in the Proposal itself. For instance, one of the desired characteristics of the Blue Card from

the beneficiary’s prospective is the independence to choose an employer after the qualifying period.

This is, however, jeopardised by the way that the directive is transposed in national law. The original

Council Directive states that that Member States are free to decide whether the application for an EU

Blue Card is to be made by the third-country national and/or his/her employer. However, if a Member

State states that the application can only be made by the employer it gives the employer additional

bargaining power and the possibility of limiting the opportunities of the employee to look for another

job in the future, something which contradicts the initial aim of the Blue Card. For instance, this is the

case in Italy where the employer alone can initiate a Blue Card application.

6. Language barriers make EU uncompetitive

Diversity of languages makes EU uncompetitive with English speaking countries for high-skill immigrants

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There are several economic and cultural constraints that should be taken into account while designing policies to attract and retain highly-skilled migrants: ignoring these constraints might seriously undermine the effectiveness of the instruments put in place.
Language diversity
One of the biggest cultural assets of the European Union – the diversity of languages spoken – is an obstacle for attracting highly-skilled foreign workers. It is among the biggest barriers for intra-EU mobility for both EU citizens and TCNs, [Third Country Nationals] as moving to another member state might result in employment in an occupation not corresponding to a migrant’s qualifications. The crucial role played by language in attracting talents can be observed in the labour-market related global market for tertiary-level students. Out of ten top destinations for tertiary-level international students four are English-speaking countries that together receive almost 40 percent of total mobile students: the USA (19%), the UK (10%), Australia (6%), and Canada (3%).

7. Lack of standardized EU qualification system

Credentials and qualifications aren’t recognized across the EU, so “skilled” foreigners face obstacles having their skills accepted for job applications. This has to be fixed before EU can compete for high-skilled professionals

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

The problem is specific to all destinations countries. However, migrants choosing the EU as a destination encounter additional obstacles related to the absence of a unique EU wide framework and low level of harmonisation of procedures related to the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills across member states. According to OECD and EU (2016), there is, currently, no automatic recognition of academic or professional qualifications, even within the EU, and each Member State applies its own rules. Instead, there is a framework that guarantees the right to request recognition, as well as the conditions for this process. Once that foreign qualifications are recognised in the Member State of residence, third-country nationals can benefit from equal treatment in recognition procedures. However, the evidence of formal qualifications issued by a third country shall be regarded as evidence of formal qualifications if the holder has three years professional experience in the profession concerned on the territory of the Member State which recognised that evidence of formal qualifications certified by that Member State. “In each EU Member State the various rules and procedures applying to the recognition of foreign professional qualifications make up a complex and disparate web of practices rather than a homogeneous corpus. Procedures differ depending on the occupational field, the scope of practice, and the regulated or un-regulated status of the profession for which recognition is sought. Moreover, authority over recognition is generally highly fragmented— with numerous public and private stakeholders involved in the process. These are not characteristics singular to EU Member States.” (MPI Europe, 2015). This jeopardises the potential intra-EU mobility of highly-skilled third-country workers. It also undermines the attractiveness of the EU labour market for foreign highly-skilled workers who might prefer destinations (such as the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) where their qualifications once recognised are valid through the whole territory. The presented discussion suggests that the creation of an effective and efficient EU-wide framework enabling recognition of foreign formal qualifications is a necessary condition for attracting highly-skilled professionals to the EU.

8. Salary threshold too high

AFF Plan (2016 reform proposal) lowers the salary threshold (minimum amount of money for the job to qualify for the Blue Card), but it’s not enough. It would still leave out many high-skilled workers

**Analysis: The salary threshold is a means of ensuring that the Blue Card is only used for “real” high-skilled jobs. It comes with a requirement that the job the immigrant is coming for must pay at least 1 to 1.5 times the average national salary in the country they’re moving to (the country has some discretion to set it between 1 and 1.5). This helps exclude unskilled people working for minimum wage from getting Blue Cards. AFF Plan lowers it to 1.4 (allowing potentially a few more jobs to qualify at 1.4 that wouldn’t qualify at 1.5). Big deal, that won’t accomplish much.**

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Lowering the salary threshold. The average national salary and 1.4 of it are proposed as the lower and higher bounds of the salary threshold (instead of current 1.5). A lower salary threshold (80 % of the regular one) will also be offered for two categories: recent graduate professionals; and workers in occupations experiencing labour shortages. This is in line with the position of the European Parliament expressed in the Report in the section On revision of the Blue Card (133): “ It is clear that the directive should focus not just on the highly-qualified, but also on targeted high-qualification occupations where there are proven labour shortages”. Offering a lower salary threshold to the first group, who might struggle to find a job meeting the salary threshold requirement upon graduation, would help to retain foreign graduates after they complete their studies in Europe and facilitate the entry of young talents from abroad. These measures will increase the pool of potential beneficiaries. However, the national average salary is not especially sensitive to the wage dynamics of a given sector. The threshold to be established, though lower, still does not take into account factors defining the salary for a particular job (occupation, sectors, region etc.). It, thus, leaves out many potential highly-skilled foreign workers.

9. Racism & discrimination

Racism and discrimination keep high skilled immigrants out of upper level jobs

**[Note: in this article Dr Kalantaryan is commenting specifically about the potential impacts of the 2016 Blue Card reform plan.]**

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Skilled migrants are among the most desired in destination countries due to the human capital they bring with them. However, many of them do not succeed in working in occupations corresponding to their qualifications, partially due to the lack of recognition, and partially due to the so-called “glass ceiling” or ‘’glass doors”: intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevent migrants from getting upper level jobs despite their qualifications. According to Brandi (2001) 40 percent of highly-skilled migrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America in Rome work in low-skilled jobs. The author suggests that there is evidence of various kinds of glass ceilings in the workplace, compounded by a type of differential racism which seems to privilege some migrants over others. Andersson and Fejes (2010) and Morrice (2013) describe career advancement related difficulties encountered by highly-qualified refugees in, respectively, Sweden and the UK. These phenomena are well documented by scholars for traditional destinations (see, for example, Pendakur and Woodcock 2010; Wagner and Childs 2006). For example, Guo (2013) describing the situation in Canada states that many migrants suffer from unemployment and underemployment, poor economic performance, and downward social mobility, which can be attributed to a “triple glass effect” consisting of a “glass gate”, “glass door”, and “glass ceiling’’. The first one denies immigrants’ entrance to guarded professional communities, the second one blocks immigrants’ access to professional employment at high-wage firms and the third one prevents immigrants from moving up to management positions because of their ethnic and cultural background. Wagner and Childs (2006) find that even those possessing the most demanded skills encounter difficulties in gaining access to jobs corresponding to their qualifications: migrant optometrists become taxi drivers, teachers become clerical assistants, and environmental engineers stack supermarkets shelves.

10. Insignificant results

The Blue Card reform proposal - even if it worked in a best-case scenario - isn’t ambitious enough to meet EU labor market needs or address shortages

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

The set of reforms presented in the Proposal though necessary (if approved), are unlikely to enable the Blue Card to address labour-market shortages even in the near future. The estimated number of highly-skilled workers that will be attracted according to estimates (from 32,484 to 137,690) is below the desired level. By 2020, the expected number of unfilled vacancies for ICT and highly-skilled health sector processionals will be respectively 756,000 (130,000 per year) and 1 million (200,000 per year). Hence, the number of highly-skilled workers attracted, even in the best case scenario, can hardly cover the needs of one of these two sectors. These figures indicate that the Proposal is simply not ambitious enough in meeting EU labour-market needs.

Blue Card reform proposal is unlikely to address EU labor market shortages

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Finally, the set of reforms presented in the Proposal though necessary (if approved), are unlikely to enable the Blue Card to address labour-market shortages even in the near future as the estimated number of high skilled workers to be attracted is below the desired level. As already discussed in the study the number of highly–skilled workers attracted in the best case scenario can hardly cover the needs of one sector. In other terms the Proposal is simply not ambitious enough to meet the needs of the EU labour market. Moreover, the numerous objective obstacles such as linguistic heterogeneity, absence of a common framework on formal qualification recognition, relatively low wage premium and the absence of an EU-wide framework regulating social security access for third-country nationals are and will continue to jeopardise the competitive potential of the European Union in the market for internationally mobile talents.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Wasted talent

“High skill” immigrants often end up overqualified for the jobs they can get, and their talents are wasted

**[Note: in this article Dr Kalantaryan is commenting specifically about the potential impacts of the 2016 Blue Card reform plan.]**

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

Migrants are frequently highly overqualified, which leads to a situation when brain gain becomes brain waste, through deskilling and devaluation of previous learning and work experience. There are several reasons explaining high overqualification rates which signals obstacles to the full utilisation of migrants’ human capital. First, mismatch between the skill shortages in the destination and the skills of arriving migrants. In other words, the skills or formal qualifications migrants possess are not relevant or demanded in the destination. Second, lack of mechanisms in place enabling cross border transfer of skills (such as mutual recognition of qualification). In this case migrants have either to go through the education system of the country of origin or to be employed in a position which does not correspond to his/her qualifications. The first option is usually costly both in terms of money and time and as migrants often cannot afford it they end up being employed in an occupation which does not require any formal qualification. Last, but not least, possible discrimination in the labour market (such as the “glass ceiling”) is a possible cause of the waste of talents.

High-skill immigrants often have jobs where their skills are unused or under-used

Dr. Sona Kalantaryan 2017 (she is Ph.D in economics from University of Turin, Italy) Revisions in the Blue Card Directive: Reforms, Constraints and Gaps, November 2017 (brackets added) <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=528094093074028099089012069086067027051081060000028091094067078023097064009066079087049101030035000120107087013000113077071077020058046015033067092000031091116092088020033042127002098077074002003097124021075005120100102097102004111095096072073075085106&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>

TCNs [Third Country Nationals] are better educated than the natives in the UK, Ireland and Hungary. However, better education does not necessarily translate into better occupations. It is not enough to attract highly skilled migrants, as admission alone does not guarantee a utilisation of those skills at destination. Migrants frequently end up working in occupations not corresponding to their qualification and skills. The extent of skill-occupation mismatch for highly–skilled migrants is usually measured by over qualification rate: the share of workers holding a higher qualification than the job requires . Figure 6 presents the relevant information for select EU member states as well as for traditional destinations. An employed person is defined as being overqualified if he/she has a tertiary degree but if he/she is not working in a job that is ISCO-level 1-3; i.e. neither classifies as a manager nor as a professional/associate professional occupation. With the exception of New Zealand, migrants are more exposed to over-qualification than natives in all countries included in the table. Italy and Spain demonstrate the highest rates for migrants among the EU member states present there. These countries scored poorly both in terms of attracting the highly skilled and in terms of utilising their skills. The overqualification rates for the foreign-born population in the USA and Canada are higher, on average, than in Europe. Overqualification for migrants is the highest in Canada. These figures indicate that though the country is successful in attracting highly skilled through its points system, the highly-skilled are not necessarily employed in occupations corresponding to their qualifications.

2. Brain Drain

If Blue Card works and attracts skilled migrants from poor countries, it drains away the talent needed for their economic development. Impact: Poverty in Africa

Keith Nuthall 2008 (journalist) GLOBAL: 'Blue card' could intensify brain drain 6 July 2008 UNIVERSITY WORLD NEWS <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20080703153638415#:~:text=Serious%20concerns%20have%20been%20raised,fuel%20the%20African%20brain%20drain.&text=Under%20proposals%20prepared%20by%20the,immigration%20procedures%20for%20skilled%20migrants>. (brackets in original)

There was general agreement at the parliamentary hearing that Europe fared poorly in attracting highly trained immigrants compared with the US, Canada and Australia. But Portuguese socialist MEP Armando França asked whether "attracting highly skilled workers from non-EU states does not undermine solidarity" with developing countries. França said pro-actively seeking to poach home-grown talent from Africa and elsewhere "seems paradoxical when we see that the [European] union has policies to support less developed countries". "I have major doubts about this proposal", França declared, and asked whether the EU should rather concentrate on forging cooperation agreements with non-EU countries with skilled migrants sought by European universities and companies. And Africa is the major concern. An analysis written by the secretariat for the parliamentary committee on civil liberties, justice and home affairs, which staged the hearing, focused on Europe's neighbours to the south. The analysis paper voiced concerns that a blue card scheme would exacerbate the problem of brain drain from the African continent. It noted the United Nations Development Programme had reported that outward migration cost African countries more than EUR2.5 billion (US$4 billion) through the employment of 150,000 expatriate professionals annually. The parliamentary paper continued: "Coupled with the loss of trained professionals due to HIV-AIDS, brain drain erodes the valuable human capital critically needed for economic growth and human development in Africa."

Big Links to DA’s 3 through 6 – Fracturing / dividing / weakening the European Union

Link: Blue Card is “sensitive and politically charged” with “political deadlock”

Anita Timea Rigo 2020 (master’s degree candidate in International Relations, European Union Studies at Leiden University) 21 July 2020 Master’s Thesis: “The revision of the EU’s Blue Card Directive and its competitiveness against the national high-skilled migration schemes” <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2701700/download>

The development of common migration policies is primarily the ambition of the European Commission that sees it as a chance for furthering the European integration project as well as an opportunity to gain more competence. However, in such a sensitive and politically charged policy area as migration it traditionally has a hard time to put legislations in effect. It has become even more difficult to achieve progress in migration policies after the migration crisis in 2015. Nevertheless, the European Commission, as the driver of the European integration, has not given up its ambitions. In 2016 the Juncker Commission has introduced a proposal for a new Blue Card Directive that aimed to eliminate the flaws of the current legislation. Although this proposal has been in a political deadlock since the beginning of 2019, the newly elected European Commission has made commitments to carry on with the proposal

Backup Link: Blue Card is a “politically sensitive topic” among EU members

Anita Timea Rigo 2020 (master’s degree candidate in International Relations, European Union Studies at Leiden University) 21 July 2020 Master’s Thesis: “The revision of the EU’s Blue Card Directive and its competitiveness against the national high-skilled migration schemes” <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2701700/download>

In this chapter the development of EU labour migration policies is presented to place the Blue Card Directive in a wider context and demonstrate the EU’s complex journey towards the establishment of a common labour migration policy. From a policy-making perspective, developing a common policy in labour migration should be less complex than in other areas of migration as the Member States do not have to follow rules of binding international conventions when they decide about who they allow to come to live and work in the EU. However, as all areas of migration, it still represents a politically sensitive topic.

Background / Reasons why: EU member nations really don’t want to give up their individual immigration schemes (But Blue Card reform would force them to) 🡪 If we wait for the additional reforms (Inherency #1), that problem will be solved

Anita Timea Rigo 2020 (master’s degree candidate in International Relations, European Union Studies at Leiden University) 21 July 2020 Master’s Thesis: “The revision of the EU’s Blue Card Directive and its competitiveness against the national high-skilled migration schemes” <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2701700/download>

All in all, the most competitive national high-skilled immigration schemes in the EU and the Blue Card proposal have several similar elements, yet domestic policies still provide for simpler arrangements and more flexibility for the Member States. Based on the findings of the current thesis, it can be expected that the proposal for the Blue Card Directive will be modified to some extent in the future, and there is a high chance that the Member States will not agree to the abolition of their national schemes. The main added value of the Blue Card, the intra-EU labour mobility is seemingly not a priority interest for the Member States but for the Commission. Therefore, national governments would probably keep on clinging to their national policies, just as they did before.

Reason Blue Card reform hasn’t happened yet is because it’s so controversial and member states don’t trust each other

Anita Timea Rigo 2020 (master’s degree candidate in International Relations, European Union Studies at Leiden University) 21 July 2020 Master’s Thesis: “The revision of the EU’s Blue Card Directive and its competitiveness against the national high-skilled migration schemes” <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2701700/download>

The new European Commission that took office in December 2019 has already expressed its ambitions to enhance legal migration opportunities to the EU, and the revision proposal of the Blue Card Directive has been listed among the ‘Priority Pending Proposals’ in its Work Programme. At the time of writing this thesis, the European Commission is working on a new ‘reinforced’ skills agenda for Europe as well as a new European Pact on Migration and Asylum. In its recent Communication it has committed to soon provide details for a renewed “approach to legal migration management in order for the EU to better attract skills and talents that the EU labour market needs”. It explicitly declared that “relaunching and concluding swiftly the negotiations of the Blue Card Directive to attract highly skilled workers will remain a priority”. However, while the ambitions are clearly there, progress remains to be seen as regards the proposal which has been proved to be extremely difficult in the past. A relatively recent note from the Presidency to the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum acknowledges that the proposal is “in deadlock as no compromise has been reached yet between the co-legislators, despite the efforts of multiple Council presidencies”. As it informs, the difficulties, that grew “in the context of the migration crisis that emerged in 2015 and the complex overall situation”, are primarily related to the parallel national schemes for high-skilled labour that the Member States wish to maintain, but not to the mobility provisions which would be the primary objective of the common policy. However, it also acknowledges that the mutual recognition of residence permits constitutes a highly problematic issue due to the lack of trust among the Member States.

Big Fracture Link & Brink: Stirring up controversy on immigration would be really bad. EU is on the brink of disintegration over it

Bodo Weber 2020 (senior associate of the [Democratization Policy Council](http://www.democratizationpolicy.org/), based in Berlin) 9 March 2020 “Threat to EU on Greece-Turkey border is EU-made” <https://euobserver.com/opinion/147672> (the “Visegrad” countries are: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia)

The current narrative's complete avoidance of core questions is astounding. Reasoned, rational discussion seems to now be a collective pan-European taboo. EU leaders evidently fear that just by opening up such discussion, the Union would disintegrate. In September 2015, when some of the Visegrád countries declared they would not implement the EU's legally-binding relocation scheme, the Union collapsed as a legal entity in the area of asylum and migration.

3. Reduced world stability from fracturing the EU

Example: Disagreement over immigration policy was a major reason Britain left the EU

Max Boot 2016 (leading military historian and foreign policy analyst. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York) July 2016 “Brexit: Isolationism or Atlanticism?” <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/issues/resources/strategika_issue_33_web.pdf>

Britons might never have voted to leave the European Union had it not been for the refugee crisis that hit Europe as a result of the Syrian civil war. Even though Britain has accepted only some 5,000 Syrian refugees, German premier Angela Merkel agreed to take in 800,000, thus fueling fears across the continent of an influx of possible terrorists. Those fears were exploited by elements of the “Leave” campaign, principally Nigel Farage and the UK Independence Party, and no doubt contributed crucial momentum to the final outcome.

Brink: EU faces an uncertain future with multiple crises threatening unity and increasing division

Meagan Araki, Annie Chang, Troy Lindell, Alison Wendler 2017. (members of the “Challenges to European Unity Task Force” at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, Univ. of Washington) March 2017 CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN UNITY: OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS <https://jsis.washington.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Task-Force-J-Report-2017_Lorenz.pdf>

Today, Europe faces an uncertain future. The migration crisis, rise in terrorism, economic downturn, mounting external pressures and a responsive populist movement, have threatened the basis of European stability. The major influx of refugees into Europe has placed immense pressure on the EU’s infrastructure and capacity to integrate refugees into the European identity. Europe has experienced a growing number of terrorist attacks, leading to nationalist and xenophobic policies. Additionally, Russia’s encroachment into Eastern Europe has strained Russia and Europe’s relationship. The Euro crisis has furthered the divide between the core and peripheral EU countries, revealing the inequality between European citizens and growing stagnant employment and growth opportunities.

Link: EU stability promotes US ability to maintain global security and stability

Meagan Araki, Annie Chang, Troy Lindell, Alison Wendler 2017. (members of the “Challenges to European Unity Task Force” at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, Univ. of Washington) March 2017 CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN UNITY: OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS <https://jsis.washington.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Task-Force-J-Report-2017_Lorenz.pdf>

Policies that encourage the unity between EU member states should be strongly supported. It is significant that the United States demonstrate support in this ongoing migration crisis, as it will help relieve the pressures member states are experiencing, as well as help mend existing tensions. The cohesion, stability, and cooperation of European Union serve a key interests of the United States. With these aspects, a more unified European Union can strengthen its position as a global actor, as well as strengthen its existing relations with the United States. This can further United States’ objectives of security and stability throughout the international community.

Impact: World peace & prosperity at risk without US influence. US hegemony is key to global peace & prosperity

Capt. M. V. Prato 2009 (United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University) “The Need for American Hegemony” Feb 2009 <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a508040.pdf>

The world witnessed a vast shift in the polarity of geopolitics after the Cold War. The United States became the world’s greatest hegemon with an unequalled ability to globally project cultural, political, economic, and military power in a manner not seen since the days of the Roman Empire. Coined the “unipolar moment” by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, the disparity of power between the U.S. and all other nations allows the U.S. to influence the world for the mutual benefit of all responsible states. Unfortunately, the United States is increasingly forced to act unilaterally as a result of both foreign and domestic resentment to U.S. dominance and the rise of liberal internationalism. The United States must exercise benevolent global hegemony, unilaterally if necessary, to ensure its security and maintain global peace and prosperity.

4. Populism and Authoritarian Government

Link: AFF plan weakens / fractures the EU

Cross apply the BIG LINK.

Link: Fear, anxiety and skepticism about the EU leads to the rise of populist authoritarian figures

Meagan Araki, Annie Chang, Troy Lindell, Alison Wendler 2017. (members of the “Challenges to European Unity Task Force” at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, Univ. of Washington) March 2017 CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN UNITY: OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS <https://jsis.washington.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Task-Force-J-Report-2017_Lorenz.pdf>

Additionally, the complications surrounding EU accession and instability in Turkey and the Balkans present unique challenges to the dynamic of the EU. These real and perceived threats have induced fear and anxiety into the European public. As these security threats have worsened with little to no progress made, Euroscepticism has grown and enabled the populist movement. By capitalizing on this sentiment, populist parties have gained increasing support throughout Europe. Populists promise to take back power from the corrupt and inefficient political elite, and give it back to the general public. Europeans have increasingly turned to strongman figures who value strength and security over tolerance and unity.

Brink & Example: Hungary now has authoritarian government, putting EU at high risk right now

Philippe Dam 2020 (master’s degree in international administration; Human Rights Watch’s advocacy director for Europe and Central Asia) 1 Apr 2020 “Hungary’s Authoritarian Takeover Puts European Union at Risk” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/01/hungarys-authoritarian-takeover-puts-european-union-risk>

On Monday, under the pretext of addressing the COVID-19 public health emergency, [Hungary's](https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/hungary) parliament gave [green light to the Orban-led government](https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/23/hungarys-orban-uses-pandemic-seize-unlimited-power) to rule with unlimited power for an indefinite time. Prime Minister Viktor Orban can now suspend any existing law and implement others by decree, without parliamentary or judicial scrutiny. Elections have been suspended. The law allows for new criminal penalties of five years in prison for publishing vaguely defined “false” or “distorted” facts – another blow to media freedom in the country. With this law, Hungary becomes the first country in the European Union to virtually abolish all democratic checks-and-balances. How has it come to this? In the past [10 years](https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/05/16/wrong-direction-rights/assessing-impact-hungarys-new-constitution-and-laws), the government has spared no efforts to [curb judicial independence](https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/hungary), restrict [civil society](https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/17/hungary-determined-silence-any-critics-left-standing) activities, and gain near full [control over the media](https://www.euronews.com/2019/06/12/don-t-be-fooled-hungary-s-government-remains-a-threat-to-european-values-view). Having repeatedly failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation, EU institutions risk making the same mistake again.

Link & Impact: Weak EU leads to rise of dictatorship and loss of freedom for millions more

Kenneth Roth 2020 (executive director of Human Rights Watch, one of the world's leading international human rights organizations; former federal prosecutor in New York; graduate of Yale Law School) 27 Apr 2020 “Stopping the Authoritarian Rot in Europe” [https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/27/stopping-authoritarian-rot-europe#](https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/27/stopping-authoritarian-rot-europe)

Rot tends to spread when it encounters no resistance. Dictator wannabes prey upon weakness. EU and member state leaders now need to ask themselves: is the EU only a trading bloc or also a club of democracies? The answer to that question used to be obvious. Sadly, it no longer is. Ten million EU citizens now live under authoritarian rule. How many millions more will have to suffer the loss of their freedoms before Europe’s leaders draw the line?

5. Economic recession (from weakening / fracturing the EU)

Link: AFF plan weakens / fractures the EU with greater division

Cross-apply the BIG LINK.

Link: EU unity is necessary for beneficial trade deals

Julian Bonte-Friedheim 2020 (head writer at The Perspective) “IS THE EU BETTER OFF DIVIDED OR TOGETHER?” (month not given in the published article) <https://www.theperspective.com/debates/businessandtechnology/is-the-eu-better-off-divided-or-together/>

Better trade deals can be negotiated from within the EU. For any European nation, negotiating trade deals with other countries is much more advantageous as part of the EU rather than as an independent economy. As one of the world’s [biggest economic unions](https://www.thebalance.com/world-s-largest-economy-3306044), the EU has a lot more leverage when brokering a deal with China or India. Being able to offer (or withhold) access to its many consumers is a strong bargaining tool. Additionally, there is [free trading](https://www.ft.com/content/1688d0e4-15ef-11e6-b197-a4af20d5575e) between members of the EU, as it is a customs union. Individual countries, while able to create their own terms, are unlikely to reach deals as beneficial as the EU does on its own.

Brink: Cracks already being seen in EU unity, and even partial non-cooperation will eventually bleed it to death

Hans Vollaard 2020 ( Lecturer in Dutch and European Politics at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.) “One down, many to go? European disintegration after Brexit” 23 March 2020 <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2020/03/23/one-down-many-to-go-european-disintegration-after-brexit/>

Even though there may not be other instances of European disintegration like Brexit, dissatisfaction may lead to other forms of disintegration. Not by countries leaving the EU entirely, but only partially. These partial exits involve member states not complying with the EU rules, for instance with respect to public finances in the Eurozone (Italy), or the Schengen rules, many member states have introduced “temporary” national border surveillance since the migration crisis of 2015. Another partial exit is the desire to pay less money to ‘Brussels’, such as expressed by the so-called Hanseatic group of EU member states led by the Netherlands. Disintegration can also occur involuntarily, when one member state wants to exclude another member state, such as the calls to push Greece out of the euro or the Schengen area. These partial forms of disintegration undermine the functioning of the EU. Its rules are less respected, and it gets fewer resources to function properly. In such a scenario, the EU would gradually ‘bleed to death’.

Impact: Devastating economic impact. Financial recession

Mauro Guillen 2016 (holder of the Zandman Endowed Professorship in International Management at the Wharton School. He served as Director of the Lauder Institute of Management & International Studies between 2007 and 2019. PhD in sociology from Yale University and a Doctorate in political economy from the University of Oviedo in Spain.) 13 June 2016 “On the Brink: How a Brexit Could Fracture a Fragile Europe” <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/on-the-brink-how-brexit-could-fracture-a-fragile-europe/>

The European Union is the largest economy in the world. It’s not as rich as the U.S., but it is bigger in terms of gross domestic product if you combine those 28 countries. If there is a crisis of confidence that undermines consumer spending and business confidence, then you are going to get into maybe even a third recession. That would be devastating for Europe itself, but it would be really bad for everybody else in the world that has business with Europe, including the United States. Exporters to Europe and American companies that have investments in Europe are going to suffer. Companies such as GE or GM or Boeing, 20% to 30% of their business is in Europe, so it could have a large impact.

Past precedent: Brexit caused serious economic damage

Kimberly Amadeo 2020 (over 20 years of senior-level corporate experience in economic analysis and business strategy. She is a U.S. Economy expert for The Balance and president of WorldMoneyWatch, which produces publications about the global economy) “Brexit Consequences for the U.K., the EU, and the United States” last updated 14 Mar 2020 <https://www.thebalance.com/brexit-consequences-4062999>

The day after the Brexit vote, the currency markets were in turmoil. The [euro fell 2% to $1.11](https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-euro-to-dollar-conversion-its-history-3306091).﻿ The pound fell 8% to $1.36.﻿ Both increased the [value of the dollar](https://www.thebalance.com/value-of-us-dollar-3306268). That strength is not good for U.S. [stock markets](https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-stock-market-how-it-works-3305893). It makes American shares more expensive for foreign investors. A weak pound also makes U.S. exports to the U.K. more expensive. The United States has an $18.9 billion trade surplus with the U.K. In 2018, it exported $141 billion while importing $122 billion.﻿ Brexit could turn this surplus into a deficit if a weak pound makes U.K. imports more competitive. Brexit dampens business growth for companies that operate in Europe. U.S. companies invested $758 billion in the U.K. in 2018.﻿ Most of this was the finance sector with some manufacturing. These companies use the U.K. as the gateway to free trade with the EU nations. U.K. businesses invested $561 billion in the United States. Brexit puts at risk jobs in both countries. In addition, there were 716,000 U.K. immigrants in the United States and 215,000 U.S. immigrants in the U.K. in 2019.

6. Russia gains influence

Link: AFF divides / weakens the EU

Cross-apply the BIG LINK.

Link: Russia uses EU division to advance its agenda and gain influence to accomplish bad things

Ian Kearns 2018 (co-founder, former director and board member of the European Leadership Network, a pan-European group of senior political, military and diplomatic leaders. Former specialist advisor to the Joint House of Commons/House of Lords Committee on National Security Strategy. Former deputy chair and director of secretariat to former NATO Secretary General George Robertson) Collapse: Europe After The European Union (no month given in the published article) <https://books.google.com/books?id=ZVBSDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT223&lpg=PT223&dq=EU+immigration+reform+hopeless&source=bl&ots=79cHvPH2qu&sig=ACfU3U3diw6xbMj9V9bRAyJPoyV-5N1epA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjswYPI-ZrqAhWyneAKHfCQBCE4ChDoATAAegQIChAB#v=onepage&q=EU%20immigration%20reform%20hopeless&f=false>



Impact: Russian influence damages democracy, promotes authoritarian rule

Geir Hagen Karlsen 2019 (Lieutenant Colonel and Lecturer, Norwegian Defence University College) 8 Feb 2019 “Divide and rule: ten lessons about Russian political influence activities in Europe” <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0227-8>

Russia is an authoritarian and corrupt state that regards the EU and, more specifically, NATO, as a challenge, a competitor and a threat. Its influence activities are malicious, undermining alliances and creating distrust, weakening what Moscow sees as their opponents and thus ensuring the survival of this authoritarian regime. Their interference is worrisome at several levels. First, Russia is undermining core democratic processes, like elections, and trust in the political system and its institutions. Second, their disinformation and manipulation of media and social media is directly undermining the political discourse, essential to democracy. Third, this is further exacerbated by their malicious attacks on individuals, like the Finnish journalist Jessika Aro, who has been tracked and harassed systematically after exposing Russian trolling of social media (Aro, [2015](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0227-8#ref-CR3)). However, the overall Russian approach is simple, divide and rule.

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