

Thousands of Refugees Flee Northward from Greece

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The precarious situation in Greece means that thousands of refugees are making their way to northern Europe. There, the reaction is increasingly panicked: The Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer has announced plans to fend off refugees with “rigorous measures.” In Germany, there have been several attacks on asylum facilities. In Italy and the Czech Republic, there were demonstrations and riots.



Dramatic scenes at the station of Gevgelija in Macedonia: Refugees from Greece fight for a place in a train to the north. (Photos: AP)



Everyone wants to come along. (Photo: AP)



Trains to Serbia are overcrowded. (Photo: AP)

The following is from Italy’s Meridiana TV on July 17th, showing an anti-immigrant demonstration just north of Rome:

On Friday, tumult came to the station from Gevgelija in Macedonia (as shown in the AP photos above). Thousands of refugees flooded there heading northward due to the unclear situation and the rapidly deteriorating conditions in Greece. They try to get into the EU via Serbia from Macedonia. On Greek Islands the humanitarian conditions are unbearable.

However, on the Greek mainland, refugees at the moment also have little prospect of improvement: The Greek Orthodox Church considers itself unable to cope with them in addition to the problems of their own people. German Economic News is informed that some monasteries have three times as many people to feed than free meals available to feed them. The problem for the monasteries is that they are the first to feel the financial restrictions. Cash is scarce because of the 60-euro limit for withdrawals — therefore in Greece, charities that were always very generous must now set strict priorities. They need the cash for their own families. Social services suffer a noticeable decline in donations, due to the economic crisis.

Reception conditions for refugees are “very precarious,” according to the Commissioner for

Refugees of the United Nations, António Guterres. "And the conditions for integration into Greek society are also extremely precarious."

YTD 80,000 migrants already had come to Greece before the crisis. Many were traveling through Greece to other countries, and this continues. "Therefore, we are seeing more and more a movement of refugees from Greece to Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and then continuing northward," Guterres said.

The United Nations cooperated with the Greek government in the construction of the asylum system. Support for the refugees should "be the responsibility of the European Union," Guterres said.

Instead, the EU follows, after the rejection of a quota by the Eastern Europeans and France, a different strategy, and prepares for the possible onslaught with defensive measures: Hungary has announced its intention to construct a border fence to prevent refugees from reaching its cities. This has also been proposed in Italy, because the refugees, according to north Italian regional politicians, interfere with tourism [an essential industry there].

On Saturday night, went up in flames in Remchingen (Baden-Württemberg) a vacant former clubhouse, after a remodeling to prepare for refugees to move in during 2016. Early Saturday morning in Lower Franconia Waldaschaff a paper trashcan burned in the garage of a refugee hostel [perhaps lit by locals]. At the time about 18 people were in the house, but no one was injured. The building itself was not damaged.

And before that, on Thursday night, unknown person(s) in Bavaria Reichertshofen set fire to two entrances at a building complex, which is planned to house starting in September, 67 asylum seekers. A motorist noticed this fire shortly after midnight. Firefighters then arrived, but already two floors and the roof had burned.

The Messaggero and the Corriere della Sera report that in Rome on Friday occurred clashes with police because a crowd demanded the withdrawal of refugees from a camp. The atmosphere was extremely aggressive (see video at the beginning of the article)

In Prague there have been demonstrations for and against immigrants. The news portal Novinky.cz showed around a thousand people signed for a rally organized by the right-wing National Democrats, against immigration, and for separation of the Czech Republic from the European Union. A large contingent of police prevented clashes with hundreds of participants in a demonstration against right-wing extremists which had earlier begun. The protesters fought against the extremists mainly shouting matches, but occasionally there were also minor scuffles.

About a month ago numerous Czech right-wing extremists had been met in the Slovak capital Bratislava with violent incidents on the edge of a demonstration against the admission of refugees and the "Islamisation of Europe."

CSU [Christian Social Union, rightwing Bavarian party] chief Horst Seehofer wants to further reduce the record number of asylum seekers from South Eastern Europe by using "rigorous measures." About 40 percent of asylum seekers come from the Western Balkans, Seehofer said on Saturday at the Lower Bavarian CSU district convention in Essenbach. "The acceptance rate is zero. So it can not go on." He was confronted daily by complaints from local politicians, that there are no more buildings and areas for accommodation. "We have

found this 40 percent abuse, one can say the mass abuse, and must adjust accordingly.”

In summer, accommodation is still feasible — “but then awaits the fall and winter,” and Seehofer predicted problems during the cold season. “Therefore, we need to have these issues with the Western Balkans solved now, so that we can say to our people, We have stopped the abuse ”

The issue of asylum is, in Seehofer’s assessment, so explosive that it could destabilize the established structure of German politics. “This issue can change the party,” the CSU leader said then at the district congress of the CSU at Barbing in the Upper Palatinate. At the same time, he stressed that Bavaria would continue to accept refugees from Syria and other war zones. The CSU must lead the debate in facts and should not in slogans. “We do not want to strengthen even more the seduction from the political right.”

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They’re Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST’S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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