

## POLITICAL CHALLENGES OF MODERN MIGRATION TRENDS IN EUROPE

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### ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the population in the last 70 years has been constantly accompanied by increasing migration flows. From 1950 to 2020, the population of Europe grew from about 547 million to 741 million, while the Muslim share in this population quadrupled from 10.7 million to 42.7 million people. Such an exponential growth of the Muslim population could pose political challenges for Europe, especially for the countries of Western Europe, which are often the final destination for migrants from various parts of the world, primarily from North Africa and the Middle East. This paper aims to analyse trends in migration and the rate of natural increase in order to roughly estimate whether Europe's demographic outlook will undergo a major change in the next 50 years. It also attempts to determine what kind of political challenges might arise as a result. Using the method of quantitative content analysis, it is estimated that the Christian population will decrease by about 25 million due to the ageing of the population and declining birth rates, while the Muslim population will increase by about 200 million due to migration and the rate of natural increase. The conclusion is that there are indications that migrations will change not only the demographic outlook, but also the European political and security identity in the worst case. However, in the case of government-controlled migration-induced changes, they will lead mostly to minor changes in the emigration policy.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received:  
February 21, 2023

Accepted:  
May 2, 2023

### KEYWORDS

population;  
migration; religion;  
Europe; politics;  
changes.

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## Introduction

The analysis of migration and its consequences calls for a multidisciplinary and holistic scientific approach. Therefore, it would be difficult to present projections of migration flows without going into details about the particular causes, motives, and needs of the migrants, their culture, traditions, and religion. According to the latest official statistical data that was made available by relevant institutions, such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM 2019) and the United Nations (DESA 2022a), the number of international migrants worldwide has been growing exponentially over the last 30 years due to accelerated globalisation. A common characteristic of the migration flows in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century were the so-called “chain migrations”. They were labour market-related; individual migrants searching for work would migrate to a Western country, and later, once they had settled, they would bring their families and friends, creating a chain of migrants. The 21st century is characterised by the so-called “migration waves”, in which migrants leave their homes *en masse*, in groups, because of political and civil conflicts, resource scarcity, or climate change. The migrant crisis has become a part of scientific discourse because, in addition to human resources, it also involves economic, societal, and religious resources, which, from the point of view of security studies, represent a particular challenge. What constitutes a particular security issue are illegal migration flows, i.e., the smuggling of migrants. Because these numbers are difficult to quantify or record, it all comes down to projections and estimates. Alternatively, a rough estimate of annual migration flows in the 1990s in the EU amounted to about 1.2 million regular and about 400-500 thousand irregular immigrants, while in the US, there were about 860 thousand regular and about 300 thousand irregular immigrants (McKeown 2004). That means one-third of cross-border migrations are irregular migration flows and the smuggling of migrants.

Improved quality of life and the advances of modern medicine in the 20th century resulted in a longer human lifespan and the growth of the total world population. As it can be seen in Table 1, over the 50 years from 1960 to 2010, the population grew from less than 3.5 billion to 6.5 billion, and the continents of Asia and Africa had the greatest growth (Kovačević and Kovačević 2016). According to the estimates of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), demographic projections point out that the current population of 7.9 billion will reach 8.5 billion by 2030, 9.7 billion by 2050, and 10.9 billion by 2100, whereas the highest population growth will be recorded in underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa, from 1.3 to 4.3 billion (DESA 2019).

Table 1: Population growth 1960-2010, in millions

Continent	Population 1960	Population 2010	Growth %
Europe	675	710	5.2
Asia	1,888	3,900	106.5
North America	292	470	61
South America	265	385	45.3
Oceania	17	33	95
Africa	306	945	208.5
In total	3,343	6,443	92.3

Source: The author's calculation based on Kovačević and Kovačević 2016.

Regardless of population growth projections, Smalley believes that the birth rate is declining worldwide and that this is a consequence of the development of countries. According to Smalley's prediction, "Whenever a nation begins to develop, the fertility rate generally drops. In fact, in many sections of the developed world, birth rates are now so low that we have to increase them. During our lifetime, we will be able to witness that population growth will continue to slow all over the world, then it will top out at around 10 billion people. It probably will not go higher than that" (Smalley 2005, 414). As the table above shows, the regions of Africa and Asia recorded the highest growth rates; therefore, it would seem logical to expect this growth to continue.

Religious demographics presented in Table 2 shows the percentage shares of populations by religion worldwide in 2022. The percentage shares of populations by religion show that out of the 25% of the Muslim population globally in 2022, only 6.8% lived in Europe, i.e., 1.3% lived in North America, while 93.1% lived in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). Hinduism, which is practised by 80% of the people in India, one of the world's most populated countries (1.4 billion), was the third-largest religion in the world, with 15.2% of all devotees. The number of atheists was similar and amounted to 15.6% (Deshmukh 2022).

Table 2: Distribution of populations by religions

Regions	Christians	Muslims	Atheists	Hindus	Jews	Buddhists	Folk
North America	74.6%	1.3%	19.2%	0.8%	1.6%	1.2%	0.4%
Latin America-Caribbean	89.7%	0.1%	8.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1.8%
Europe	72.2%	6.8%	20.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Middle East-North Africa	3.6%	93.1%	0.6%	0.6%	1.6%	0.2%	0.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	62.0%	31.4%	3.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	3.2%
Asia-Pacific region	7.2%	25.7%	20.0%	26.0%	0.1%	11.3%	8.6%
World	31.0%	25.0%	15.6%	15.2%	0.2%	6.6%	5.6%

Source: The author's calculation based on Deshmukh 2022.

According to data provided by the University of Chicago, in 2012, atheism was most prevalent in Northwest European countries, such as Scandinavia and the former Soviet States (The International Survey on Belief: *Belief About God Across Time and Countries*). The countries with the most people reporting no religious belief were France (33%), the Czech Republic (30%), Belgium (27%), the Netherlands (27%), Estonia (26%), Germany (25%), Sweden (23%), and Luxembourg (22%) (Dialog International 2012). It is often believed that the region of Eastern Germany (59%), which was also under communist rule, is the least religious region in Europe (Dialog International 2012).

The problem with population growth lies in the fact that there is an imbalance in the natural increase rate. In other words, on the one hand, there is a tendency to have a low birth rate in developed countries and, on the other hand, a high birth rate in underdeveloped countries. In that respect, the representatives of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde (1998), believe that population-related issues involve a high number of additional aspects besides the natural increase rate, i.e., population growth and consumption beyond the country's sustainable capabilities; epidemics and ill health in general; a declining literacy rate; and

politically and socially uncontrolled migration, including increased urbanisation (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). As a security challenge, they actually identified the main issues in the MENA region: poverty, scarcity of resources, a low level of education, diseases, and constant migration.

“Policy debate over immigration has intensified amidst growing global refugee crises and a wave of nationalist electoral victories. Immigration is not inherently “good” or “bad”. Its effects depend on the context and the policy choices that shape it” (CGD 2018, 1). Migration may impact development in various and complex ways. The review of the empirical evidence identifies many cases where migration has had direct and indirect positive impacts on development via employment generation, remittances, human capital accumulation, diaspora networks, or return migration. However, there are cases where massive and unmanaged migration, especially of highly skilled migrants, can have deleterious effects on service delivery and inequality. Migration-related shocks produce policy responses that affect both labour resource utilisation and productivity in sending countries; these, in turn, influence growth, poverty, and inequality (Katseli, Lucas and Xenogiani 2006, 10).

The analysis requires a multidisciplinary approach to the research problem, which includes a review of the literature and an analysis of various databases and institutional sources. Research methodology is based on both quantitative and qualitative approaches, such as content analysis, statistical analysis, the comparison method, and the combined heuristic prognostic method.

### **Relationship between Migration Flows and the Rate of Natural Increase**

At the international level, there is no universally accepted definition of “migrant”. An umbrella term has been provided by the International Organisation for Migration, according to which a migrant is a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether across an international border or within a country, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons . Accurate data on migration flows is difficult to collect. Monitoring migration flows requires significant resources, infrastructure, and information and communications technology systems. This presents a particular challenge for developing countries, whose capacity to collect, administer, analyse, and report data on mobility, migrations, and other areas is often limited .

Since the 70s, and especially in the 90s, when socialism collapsed, a large number of migrants have migrated from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe to the countries of Central and Northern Europe, to the so-called Western

European countries. At the same time, there was a large influx of Turkish migrants to Western European countries as well. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, due to the spread of globalisation and freedom of movement as a universal value, the movements of migrants have rapidly increased from the war-torn and economically least developed countries, primarily the MENA countries with a predominantly Muslim population, towards the developed countries of Western Europe and North America. According to the current global estimate for 2020, there are about 281 million international migrants in the world, which is equal to 3.6% of the world population, 128 million more than in 1990 (153 million), and over three times more than in 1970 (84 million) (IOM 2022). In addition, it has been estimated that the growth of international migration slowed by around two million due to COVID-19. Europe is currently the top destination for international migrants, with 87 million migrants (30.9% of the international migrant population), while the most prominent destinations are Germany with 15.8 million migrants (18.8% of the total population of Germany), Great Britain with 9.36 million (13.8%), France with 8.5 million (13.1%), Spain with 6.8 million (14.6%), Italy with 6.4 million (10.6%), the Netherlands with 2.3 million (13.8%), and Sweden with 2 million (19.8% of the total population). It is followed by 86 million international migrants living in Asia (30.5%), while North America is the destination for 59 million international migrants (20.9%), followed by Africa with 25 million migrants (9%), Latin America and the Caribbean with 15 million (5.3%), and Oceania with 9 million international migrants (3.3%) .

The latest available estimates show that there were approximately 169 million migrant workers worldwide in 2019, accounting for nearly two-thirds (62%) of the (then) 272 million global migrants. In 2019, 67% of migrant workers were residing in high-income countries – an estimated 113.9 million people. An additional 49 million migrant workers (29%) were living in middle-income countries, and 6.1 million (3.6%) were living in low-income countries. Available data reflect a long-term increasing trend in international remittances in recent years, rising from USD 128 billion in 2000 to USD 702 billion in 2020. The largest population of migrants in Africa are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. By 2050, 25%, or every fourth working-age person in the world, will be African-born. Over 31 million Africans are living outside their countries of birth; the majority stay in the region, i.e., in the surrounding countries, while 25% (about 7 million) move outside the continent (UN 2022). The arrival of a large number of refugees in a region increases the pressure on the resources and economy of that region, which is an additional serious security challenge for the host countries, primarily in the area of economic security.

According to the 2019 Report of the *International Organisation for Migration*, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa were the regions with the largest increase in the number of refugees in the world (IOM 2019). The Arab Spring of 2011 reshaped the political, social, and economic frameworks of the Middle East and Africa. Political upheavals had led to civil wars that jointly triggered an average of 2.9 million new internal displacements a year, a third of the global figure recorded between 2010 and 2019 (IDMC 2021). Out of the 30.1 million migrants in the course of nine years, 1,487,000 migrated due to natural disasters, while 28,656,000 migrated due to armed conflicts (IDMC 2021). Additionally, at least 7.8 million people fled abroad as refugees or asylum seekers by the end of 2019 (IDMC 2021). In some countries, the scale of internal and cross-border displacements has reached an unprecedented level. A half of the pre-war population of Syria, 17,060,000 (56.6%), was displaced, followed by one fifth of Iraqis (5,742,000 or 19%), a slightly lower number of Yemenis (4,254,000 or 14.1%), and Libyans (1,416,000 or 4.7%) (IDMC 2021). Certainly, the numbers have more than tripled in ten years, making the MENA region the second-most vulnerable region after sub-Saharan Africa (IDMC 2021).

### **Demographic Estimates Based on Migration Flows in Europe**

By looking at the data on population growth from 1960-2010 (Table 1), it can be noted that South America, Asia, and Africa recorded the largest population growth. Given that the majority of migrants in Europe come from Africa and the Middle East, we can assume that the population growth trends that existed in their home countries will also be maintained in the countries to which they emigrated. According to the estimates of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, more than one-fifth of the world's Muslim population lives in Europe, North America, and Australia. Statistical data show that the number of Muslims in Europe has reached 44,138,000. According to the *Report of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries*, it has been estimated that countries like Belgium and the Netherlands will be among the top seven countries that will host more than one million Muslims by 2030 (SESRIC 2018). These figures indicate that the size of diasporic Muslim communities is growing rapidly. This growth has also been accelerated by higher birth rates among Muslim communities compared to non-Muslims (SESRIC 2018). Due to the recent waves of migration and asylum seeking in Europe, which are a direct consequence of instability in the Middle East, the Muslim population in Europe is increasing exponentially. The majority of Muslim migrants to Europe live in France (from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, and Turkey), Germany (from Turkey,

Albania, Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Eritrea), and Great Britain (from India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Iran, Libya, Kenya, and Mauritius). Roughly, about 4 million migrants originate from Kazakhstan; 2.5 million migrants come from Turkey; 2.5 million from Morocco; 1.8 million from Algeria; and 1 million from Nigeria, Iraq, Iran, Albania, etc. (IOM 2022).

The Pew Research Centre in Washington, which tracks demographic trends and migration, among other things, made statistical projections of the growth of the Muslim population and presented them in three scenarios: high migration, medium migration, and zero migration. The baseline for all three scenarios is the Muslim population in Europe (defined here as the 28 member states of the European Union, plus Norway and Switzerland, but excluding Russia), which in 2016 was estimated at 25.8 million (4.9% of the total population), compared to 2010, when it amounted to 19.5 million (3.8%). Even if all forms of migration to Europe were to immediately stop, according to the “zero migration” scenario, the Muslim population in Europe is expected to grow from the current 4.9% to 7.4% by 2050. This is because Muslims are younger (by 13 years, on average) and have a higher fertility rate than other Europeans (who have one child per woman, on average), which is reflecting a global trend. The second “medium migration” scenario assumes that all refugee flows will stop but that “regular” migration to Europe (i.e., migration of those who come for reasons other than seeking asylum) will continue. Under these conditions, Muslims could reach 11.2% of Europe’s population by 2050. The “high migration” scenario projects that the record flow of refugees arriving in Europe will continue indefinitely into the future and with the same religious composition (i.e., mostly made up of Muslims), in addition to the usual annual flow of regular migrants. According to this scenario, Muslims could make up 14% of Europe’s population by 2050 (75 million) – nearly triple the current share but still considerably smaller than the size of Christian and other non-Muslim populations in Europe

In the countries that have received relatively large numbers of Muslim refugees in recent years, the biggest changes can be expected under the “high migration” scenario, the only scenario that projects these large flows of refugees to continue into the future. According to the “zero migration” scenario, for instance, Germany’s population (6% Muslim in 2016) is projected to reach 9%, while in the case of the “high migration” scenario, that percentage would be 19.7%. In regards to Sweden’s population (8% Muslim in 2016), projections are 11% under the “zero migration” scenario but as much as 31% under the “high migration” scenario by 2050. According to a Pew Research Centre study on Islam in Europe, an estimated 8.8% of the French population is Muslim (Pew Research Center 2017). The majority of French Muslims are



of North African origin: 38% are of Algerian origin, 25% are of Moroccan origin, 8% are Turkish, and 9% are from sub-Saharan countries. According to a 2016 survey of the religious composition by the Montaigne Institute, 39.6% of the population identified as atheists. Just over half (51.1%) identified as Christian, 5.6% identified as Muslim, and less than 1% (0.8%) identified as Jewish. When comparing these figures to 1986, the percentage of the French population that identifies as non-religious has exploded over the past 30 years, from 15.5% to almost 40% today (El Karoui 2016). Italy has a growing foreign population in the country, amounting to more than 5.1 million registered inhabitants, which includes Romanians, Albanians, Moroccans, Ukrainians, Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians. Considering the migrant population, the share of religious minorities in Italy is 9.7%. Among the immigrant population, religious minorities include Muslims (1,641,800), Orthodox (1,505,000), Hindus (150,800), Buddhists (113,900), Jews (4,600), as well as Protestants (216,800) and others (MRGI 2023). In Norway, estimates suggest that significant minority and indigenous communities include Finns, Roma, Jews, and Sami, as well as migrants from the former Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq, Poland, Syria, and Turkey. Particularly prominent ethnic and religious minorities are the Kurds (approximately 100,000 people) and the Assyrians, who make up about 120,000 people (MRGI 2023).

According to estimates by the International Organisation for Migration, the number of migrants in the US increased from 12 million in 1970 to 51 million in 2019. There is a similar situation in Germany, where the population almost doubled from 8.9 million in 2000 to 16 million in 2020. According to data from the *Federal Office for Migration and Refugees*, between 5.3 and 5.6 million Muslim religion adherents (6.4%-6.7%) live in Germany, with a migration population originating predominantly from Muslim countries (BMF 2021). The majority of Muslims in Germany originate from Turkey, followed by Arab countries such as Syria, the former Yugoslavia (mostly of Kosovo, Albanian, or Bosnian origin), Afghanistan, and Iran. Every year, an increasing number of Europeans, including Germans, are accepting Islam. It has been estimated that there are now up to one hundred thousand German converts — a number similar to that in France and the United Kingdom (Özyürek 2014). According to the 2021 UK Census, there are 3,868,133 Muslims, or 6.5% of the total population (ONS 2021). Minority ethnic groups in Great Britain according to the 2011 census are: Indians 1.45 million (2.3%), Pakistanis 1.17 million (1.9%), Africans 1.9 million (3%), Bangladeshis 451,500 (0.7%), Chinese 433,150 (0.7%), and Gypsies 63,200 (0.1%). The main minority religions are: Muslims 2.8 million (4.4%), Hindus 835,400 (1.3%), Sikhs 432,400 (0.7%), Jews 269,600 (0.4%), and Buddhists 261,600 (0.4%) (MRGI 2023). According to the estimation by the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE), the Muslim

population in Spain represents 4.45% of the total Spanish population in 2021, of whom 42% were Spanish citizens (most of them with foreign family origins), 38% Moroccans, and 20% of other nationalities (Nigerians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Senegalese) (UCIDE 2022). According to Eurostat data, 1.9 million immigrants entered the EU from non-EU countries in 2020. In addition, 23.7 million people (5.3%) of the 447.2 million people living in the European Union on January 1, 2021, were not EU citizens.

Based on the analysis of Muslim migrations over a period of 70 years (1950-2020), Kettani (2010) concluded that the share of the world Muslim population in the total world population was steadily increasing, from 17% in 1950 to 26% in 2020. As shown in Table 3, while the total population of Europe increased from 547 million in 1950 to 741 million in 2020, the percentage of Muslims in Europe increased from 2% in 1950 to 6% by 2020. In other words, the Muslim population has tripled in Europe and almost doubled at the global level.

Table 3: Ratio of total population vs. Muslim population 1950-2020

	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Muslims</b>
<b>Europe</b>		
1950	547.4 million	10.7 million (1.97%)
2020	741.6 million	42.7 million (5.76%)
<b>World</b>		
1950	2.5 billions	432 million (17.06%)
2020	7.8 billions	2 billion (26%)

Source: The author's calculation based on Kettani 2010.

A demographic study conducted by the *Pew Research Centre* shows that in 2010, out of the population of 6.5 billion, about 2.2 billion were Christians (32% of the world population), 1.6 billion were Muslims (23%), 1 billion were Hindus (15%), nearly 500 million were Buddhists (7%), and 14 million were Jews (0.2%). According to their estimates, by 2050, there will be almost parity between Muslims (2.8 billion or 30% of the population) and Christians (2.9 billion or 31%), and in 2100, Muslims will make up 34.9% and Christians 33.8% of the world population (Pew Research Center 2015). Similarly, the data from Global Statistics show that the number of Muslims and Christians in 50 years will be equal and stand at 3.4 billion, while in 80 years, in the year 2100, out of 11.1 of the global population, the number of Muslims will be higher than

Christians, amounting to 3.9 billion, while the population of Christians will be somewhat lower, amounting to 3.8 billion. The number of Hindus will be 1.6 billion, Buddhists 225 million, and Jews 19 million (Global Stats 2023).

Europe is not only facing the problem of the influx of migrants but also of the population policy, i.e., the natural increase rate. Radivojša (2015), as shown in Table 4, provides indicators of overall population trends in Europe in the period 1990-2011: (1) total increase-decrease of population in each of the 40 countries; (2) changes based on natural increase rate; and (3) migration trends (also expressed as a percentage of the total population in 1990).

Table 4: Natural increase and migration balance 1990-2011

1990-2011	Natural increase	%	Migration balance	%	Population (growth-decrease)	%
Austria	+ 96,000	1.2	+618,000	8.1	+714,000	9.3
G. Britain	+2,782,000	4.9	+3,229,000	5.6	+6,011,000	10.5
Italy	-272,000	-0.5	+2,932,000	5.2	+2,660,000	4.7
Germany	-2,387,000	-3	+4,752,000	6	+2,365,000	3
Norway	+330,000	7.8	+382,000	9	+712,000	16.8
Sweden	+237,000	2.8	+653,000	7.6	+890,000	10.4
Switzerland	+346,000	5.1	+851,000	12.7	+1,197,000	17.8
France	+4,829,000	8.5	+1,685,000	3	+6,514,000	11.5
Spain	+1,267,000	3.3	+6,625,000	17.1	+7,892,000	20.3
Bulgaria	-779,000	-8.9	-591,000	-6.8	-1,370,000	-15.7
Poland	+790,000	2.1	-837,000	-2.2	-48,000	-0.1
Romania	-648,000	-2.8	-2,406,000	-10.4	-3,054,000	-13.2
Hungary	-740,000	-7.1	338,000	3.3	-402,000	-3.9
Albania	757,000	23	-1,227,000	-37.5	-437,000	-14.5
Russia	-13,039,000	-8.8	8.207.000	5.4	-5,013,000	-3.4
KiM - Resolution 1244	+664,000	34.4	-796,000	-41.3	-133,000	-6.9
Serbia	-461,000	-5.9	-125,000	-1.6	-585,000	-7.5

Source: The author's calculation based on Radivojša 2015.

As can be seen in Table 4, Germany and Italy have negative natural increase rates but positive migration balances (2.9 and 4.7 million migrants, respectively), which reflect the population growth in the period of over 20 years. Countries such as Austria, Greece, Spain, and Sweden have low natural increase rates but 3-6 times higher migration balances, which consequently result in population growth. Developing countries, which are rarely the final destinations of migrants, have a declining population, while the largest outflow of population is actually from the Muslim regions of Albania, with 1.2 million emigrants, and South Serbia, AP Kosovo and Metohija, with almost 800,000 emigrants. In terms of emigration, there is a similar situation in Poland and Romania, while due to the low birth rate, the situation in Russia and Ukraine is alarming, especially considering the war between these two countries and the loss of thousands of human lives. Due to its geostrategic position, Russia itself is exposed to the constant migration of Muslims, and it has been estimated that there are currently around 20 million Muslim migrants in Russia (DESA 2022b). This analysis coincides with UN data, according to which from 2010 to 2022 the population in Europe decreased by 5.1 million in Eastern Europe and 2.2 million in Southern Europe, while it increased by 6.9 million in Northern Europe and 7.6 million in Western Europe (DESA 2022b). This result is evidently a consequence of the migration balance in developed countries as well as of the natural increase rate in the Muslim population.

Regarding the fertility rates (births per woman) and birth rate (births per 1,000 population) based on data from the World Bank and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the highest fertility rates of 2.8-4.6, i.e., the birth rate of 23-25 births per 1,000 population, are recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab world, and the Pacific, and North Africa and the Middle East are not far behind. This means that, in these regions, women give birth to 3 to 5 children on average, while in Europe the number of births amounts to 1 to 2 children; more precisely, the population of Europe has a low fertility rate of 1.5, i.e., a birth rate of 9 births per 1000 population (World Bank 2022).

Table 5: Fertility rates and birth rates by region

2020. World Bank	Fertility rates	Birth rates
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.6	24
Arab world	3.1	24
Pacific Island Small States	3.5	25
Middle East and North Africa	2.8	23
South Asia	2.3	19
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.0	16
East Asia and the Pacific	1.9	11
North America	1.6	11
Euro zone	1.5	9
Central Europe and the Baltic	1.5	9

Source: The author’s calculation based on World Bank 2022.

The analysis shows that the largest migration waves were set off out of Syria and Afghanistan, as well as from the former colonies of Algeria, Libya, and Morocco. An exceptionally high natural increase rate is recorded in Afghanistan 4.5, Pakistan 3.5, Algeria 3, Syria 2.8, Morocco 2.4, and Libya 2.2, in addition to the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Afghanistan has 35.46 births/1,000 population, Pakistan 26.48/1,000, Syria 22.72/1000, while the highest rates are actually in African countries: Niger 47.08/1000, Chad 40.45/1000, Nigeria 34.19/1000, Central African Republic 32.79/1000, Morocco 24/1000, and Libya 21.56/1000 population (World Bank 2022).

In other words, the majority of the Muslim population has high birth rates, i.e., from 3 to 5 children per woman, or from 22 to 47 births per year per 1000 population. As the trend of migration from war-torn territories increases, in the future there will be an increasing number of Africans who are leaving their continent in search of a safer place to live. This includes countries such as Nigeria, Chad, the DR Congo, and the Central African Republic, which on average have 4 to 5 births per woman, that is, from 32 to 47 births per 1,000 population. At the same time, European countries maintain an average of 1.5 children per woman, or 9 births per 1,000 population. This means that, besides the half to a million migrants arriving and their natural increase rate, the foreign population of Muslim origin is exponentially increasing in Europe. Migrants from Southeast Europe, mostly Christians, are characterised by a low natural increase rate, just as the developed countries of Western Europe are. These data also indicate that the European population of domiciled origin will start to decline, so the growth of the population in Europe will be ensured by the migrants who belong to

the Muslim religion. This means that for every 4 new-born children of Muslim origin, there is 1 child of Christian or other non-Muslim religions. In other words, in 50 years, the total European population of 741 million will decrease by about 25 million non-Muslims, while the Muslim population will triple to 75 million by simple reproduction, plus 60 million in Russia. This means that the total population of Europe will be 850 million, out of which Muslims will make up 135 million, or 16%. If we add to that the migrations that bring more than half a million Muslim migrants to 135 million annually to Europe (according to the “medium scenario”), we need to add another 25 million migrants, plus their natural increase rate, which will create another 50 million Muslim population. There is no decreasing trend in migration flows. On the contrary, the opportunities provided by globalisation, including numerous (war, energy, and ecological) crises and freedom of movement, actually indicate that this trend will continue. According to these projections, the Muslim population will be about 210 million, or about 23% of the total population in Europe, which amounts to 925 million.

### **Context of Political Challenges of Modern Migrations**

Giddens believes that an increasing number of migrants in some other regions, including a potential occurrence of national, ethnic, religious, or racial intolerance, could lead to new conflicts. According to him, negative phenomena of migration include (Giddens 2007):

- Segregation, i.e., isolation as a direct consequence of being intentionally excluded from the territory by the action of the majority population;
- Separation as a phenomenon that occurs when members of a migrant minority intentionally isolate themselves from the majority society and do not wish to function with them as a community.

In this way, the so-called ghettos, or entire neighbourhoods in cities or towns, are created where certain population groups reside that are of the same or similar origin but different from the host country, primarily on national and religious grounds. For example, Turks coming from the same districts in their homeland tend to congregate in the same neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom (Yilmaz 2005, 155). Migrants sometimes cause turbulence in the labour market. All of these are day-to-day security challenges that Western countries have been facing for a long time and that affect the security aspects of these countries to a lesser extent. Acceptance of diversity is productive when there is development through democratic and economic processes, whereas social issues (poverty, discrimination, ethnic, and religious divisions) negatively affect the social environment and deepen

conflicts. Built-up dissatisfaction can easily lead to conflicts both with the native-born population and the security services, which, in turn, can trigger wider dissatisfaction and protests among the native-born population. In 2017, Muslims and Islamic institutions in Germany were targeted 950 times; they would find Nazi symbols spray-painted on their houses; women wearing hijabs were being harassed; they were receiving threatening letters; and ultimately, 33 people were injured as a result (*Die Welt* 2018).

Terrorist and criminal groups infiltrating migration flows to reach European soil represent a particular challenge and a potential threat to security. From a security perspective, this is a form of urban security threat, especially considering that the number of terrorist activities targeting cities in developed countries has increased in the last 20 years (in 2001, New York; in 2004, Madrid and Beslan; in 2005, London; in 2015, Paris; and in 2018, Strasbourg). Many studies show the extreme attitudes of the Muslim population in Europe. The Federal Ministry of the Interior of Germany conducted a survey in 2007 and came to the conclusion that almost half of the total population of young Muslims in Germany supports fundamentalist views (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 2007). According to a 2012 survey, 72% of Turks in Germany believe that Islam is the only true religion, and 46% hope that in the future, there will be more Muslims than Christians in Germany (LRI 2012). Research by the VZB Berlin Centre for Social Sciences from 2013 shows that two-thirds of the Muslims interviewed say that religious rules are more important to them than the laws of the country they live in (WZB 2013). In December 2018, the German government tightened controls on Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Qatari funding of radical mosque congregations. This measure was recommended by an anti-terrorist agency in Berlin, which since 2015 has been monitoring the funding of Salafist proselytising in the wake of the European migrant crisis in order to prevent refugees from becoming radicalised (*Deutsche Welle* 2018). In 2016, the German security service estimated that about 24,000 Muslims were part of Islamist movements in Germany, of which 10,000 belonged to the Salafist scene (Jaschke 2018). The problem becomes much greater when the analysis attempts to deal with issues as controversial as the links between Islam, extremism, and terrorism. Putting an equal sign between Islam and violent extremism is far too easy for analysts who are not Muslims. Focus on the small part of the extremist, exaggerate the threat that Muslim extremists pose to non-Muslims in the West, and/or demonise one of the world's great religions (Cordesman 2017). In this way, there is a possibility to drift into some form of Islamophobia — blaming faith for patterns of violence driven by a tiny fraction of the world's Muslims and by many other factors like population, failed governance, and weak economic development (Cordesman 2017).

Islam is the second-largest religion in Belgium, after Christianity. The exact number of Muslims in Belgium is unknown, but various sources estimate that Islam is practised by 4.0% to 7.6% of the country's population. The Belgian government, like most Western European governments, does not collect or publish statistics on religious affiliation, so the exact number of Muslims in Belgium is unknown. According to the Council of Europe's *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, membership in a minority is an individual personal decision and is neither registered, reviewed, nor contested by government authorities. The signatories to this Convention are almost all European countries except France, which regulates it by national laws (Council of Europe 2023). The policy of not registering statistical data on the religious affiliation of the population but only on ethnicity is a way of assimilating Muslims and other non-Christian populations with the aim of strengthening ethnic identity and not religious identity. At the same time, most countries automatically grant birthright citizenship, which is another step towards assimilation and strengthening ethnic consciousness. The same also applies to Belgium. Ethnicity cannot be used as an indicator of religious affiliation since most people descending from countries where Islam is a dominant religion were granted Belgian citizenship. Their children were born as Belgian citizens and are therefore statistically indistinguishable from non-Muslims. However, according to official statistics, Belgium is at the epicentre of the Islamic State's efforts to attack Europe. With at least 451 foreign fighters who have travelled or attempted to travel to Syria and Iraq, Belgium has the highest number of foreign fighters per capita of all Western countries (Van Ostaeyen 2016). In March 2012, Alain Winants, Head of the State Security Service in Belgium, estimated that there were 1,000 jihadi sympathisers in the country, out of which around 100 were hard-core supporters (Van Ostaeyen 2016). The very policy of the Belgian government towards migrants has been deeply rooted in democracy since the 1970s. In 1974, Islam was recognised as one of the subsidised religions in Belgium, and the Muslim Executive of Belgium was founded in 1996. In 2006, the government gave about EUR 6.1 million to Islamic groups (US Department of State 2006).

Islam is the third-largest minority religious group among the British people, after Hinduism and Sikhism. The largest group of Muslims in the United Kingdom is of Pakistani origin, followed by Bangladeshis (ONS 2021). According to Gilles de Kerchove, the EU's counter-terror coordinator, the UK had the highest number of Islamist extremists in the EU in 2017, between 20,000 and 25,000. Out of this number, MI5 considered 3,000 Muslims a direct threat, and as many as 500 were under constant surveillance (*Independent* 2017).



According to a 2020 survey by the French *Institute of Public Opinion*, 46% of Muslims stated that their religious beliefs are more important than the values and laws of the French Republic (IFOP 2020). In 2018, anti-terror coordinator Gilles de Kerchove estimated that there are 17,000 radicalised Muslims and jihadists living in France (Suanzes 2017). In November 2019, French authorities closed down cafes, schools, and mosques in about 15 neighbourhoods due to disseminating political Islam and communitarian ideas and convincing a large number of individuals of terrorism-related offences (AFP 2019; Vidino 2018). The situation in Spain is similar. Jihadists entered Spain in 1994 when an Al Qaeda cell was founded. In the period 1995–2003, slightly over 100 people were arrested for offences related to militant Salafism, an average of 12 militarists per year. Despite this, there was a terrorist attack in Madrid in 2004. In the period 2004–2012, there were 470 arrests, an average of 52 per year and four times the pre-Madrid bombing average. In the years following the Madrid attacks, 90% of all jihadists convicted in Spain were foreigners, mainly from Morocco, Pakistan, and Algeria (Vidino 2018). In May 2015, radical preacher Said Rageahs, a Canadian of Somali origin, advocated segregation between Muslims and non-Muslims in a mosque in the Swedish city of Gavle and promoted the view that execution is a reasonable punishment for those who want to leave Islam or insult Muhammad. According to an expert on Islamology, Jan Hjarpe, from Lund University, Rageahs advocates extreme interpretations of Islam, and his views are typical of Wahhabis (Järvestad 2015). However, many Muslims do not subscribe to this particular interpretation of Islam.

The biggest political and security challenge that European countries are currently facing is the growing number of migrants who, in some cities, towns, or regions, could easily join and become an important segment of the economic, social, and political flows of a country. Considering the fact that, for example, one-third of the total population in Sweden or Germany will be Muslims, the European policy promoted by Germany and its allies in the EU, especially NATO, has been brought into question. When it comes to strengthening military and economic capacities, the military and economic powers, in particular, do not take population policy into account. They even urge migration so that, from the economic point of view, they can compensate for the lack of a younger workforce and the increased number of pensioners. Just as Western countries used to hope that democracy and liberalism would revive in economically less developed countries, the migration policy that has taken the wrong course will ignore the strength of the consciousness of the population of African and Asian origins, with their deeply rooted traditions and faith. As numerous studies and reports have shown, attempts to implement a policy of assimilation by not registering data

on religious affiliations will only distort the statistics, not the factual situation. Muslims will neither renounce their identity nor their religion or tradition; however, their fight for their rights and the right to be heard in Western countries is going to intensify as their population continues to grow in these countries. The statistics report that, in addition to the rising number of atheists, there is also a growing number of Christians converting to the Muslim faith. According to a 10-year study conducted by the University of Bielefeld, which analysed various aspects of attitudes towards Islam, “distrust” of Islam is highly widespread in Germany (Hummel 2013). Only 19% of Germans believe Islam is compatible with German culture (Hummel 2013). A 2019 survey published by the *Pew Research Centre* found that 42% of Spaniards, 55% of Italians, 57% of Greeks, and 64% of Czechs have a negative perception of Muslims, while the majority (68%-78%) in the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden have a positive perception of Muslims in their countries. (Pew Research Center 2019). However, according to the *Organisation for Islamic Cooperation*, 56.1% of respondents in London cited racism and Islamophobia as the main challenges of living in the United Kingdom (SESRIC 2018).

A growing Muslim population in Western European countries has already begun to influence their political arena, especially since there are many Muslims who were born and raised in these countries and have been a part of their societies for generations. Lobbying, as a legitimate right of any democratic country, can significantly alter the course of not only the political but also the military and strategic goals of a country. According to the findings of the Cambridge University study conducted between 2007 and 2018, Muslim minorities living in Europe are not proportionally represented in European politics. The study reports that Muslim minorities, on average, have the highest level of political representation in Belgium, Bulgaria, and the Netherlands, while they are underrepresented in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, and Britain (Ahmed 2021). According to the data, at least 32 out of 550 deputies, or 5.8% of the members of the National Assembly of France, are of different ethnic origins. Since collecting demographic data on ethnicity is prohibited in France, there are no official statistics on minorities. However, this magazine lists the names of certain female officials and MPs originating from Algeria, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, and Chile, which evidently shows the ethnic diversity (*France 24* 2022). According to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, the size of the national minority groups in Germany is only an estimate; since the end of World War II, no population or socio-economic statistics based on ethnicity or religion have been collected in the Federal Republic of Germany (BMI 2023). Since the German elections in 2013, deputies of Turkish origin from four different

parties have been elected to the federal parliament. Cemil Giussof was the first MP of Turkish descent and the first Muslim to be elected from the CDU political party. Five deputies of Turkish origin were elected from the SPD party, three from the Green Party, and one from the Left Party (Tahiri 2009; Sakman 2015). May Zeidani Yufanyi, a project coordinator at Insaan, a non-governmental organisation, works on improving the political and social participation of Muslims in Germany and considers the German census policy wrong and discriminatory (Ahmed 2021). The above represents only a number of the cited present-day facts. In the face of the pluralist perspective and openness of Western societies, many possible frictions will likely be avoided. It is likely that the majority of Muslim politicians will act in accordance with the major narrative in the countries where they are elected, but some discrepancies are also possible.

In Great Britain, there are groups that are active across Bangladeshi communities, such as the Young Muslim Organisation. It is linked to the Islamic Forum of Europe and the London Muslim Centre, all of which have links to the Bangladeshi political party Jamaat-e-Islami. Other major groups include another Sunni movement, Fultoli, and the Tablighi Jamaat, which is a missionary revivalist movement. All these groups work on stimulating Islamic identity (Ahmed and Ali 2019; Hussain 2006). Muslim political parties in Britain include the People's Justice Party, a Pakistani and Kashmiri Party that won seats on Manchester city council, and the Islamic Party of Britain, an Islamist party in Bradford. Nineteen Muslim MPs were elected in the UK general election in December 2019 (Zatat 2019; *Independent* 2019). At the end of 2021, 52 Islamic confessional federations, 1,819 religious communities, and 21 confessional associations were registered in the Register of Religious Entities of the Ministry of Justice of Spain. The Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE) and the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (FEERI) founded the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE), which, in 1992, after negotiations, signed a *Cooperation Agreement* with the Spanish state (UCIDE 2022). In Belgium, in 2012, a political party named "ISLAM" was founded with four candidates, who at the local elections in 2012 gained two seats in the Molenbeek and Anderlecht districts of Brussels, but in 2018 they did not pass the electoral census. Its goals are an Islamic state, while the statements of the leader of the Islamic Party about its ambitions to establish Sharia rule in Belgium are contradictory (La Hoffner 2018). Two members of the governments formed after the Belgian federal elections in 2014 have a Muslim background: Fadila Laanan and Rachid Madrane. Both are members of the Socialist Party. In 2009, Muslims occupied 19 out of the 89 seats in the Brussels Regional Parliament (Husson 2015; Zibouh 2011). Also, several politicians of Turkish origin became ministers and co-chairmen of political

parties. For example, Aygul Ozkan was appointed Minister of Social Affairs, Women, Families, Health and Integration in 2010, making her the first female minister of the Muslim faith. In the same year, Aydan Ozoguz was elected deputy leader of the SPD. By 2011, Bilkay Oney from the SPD was appointed Minister of Integration in the state of Baden-Württemberg (Sakman 2015, 199). Cem Ozdemir, co-chair of the Green Party from 2008 to 2018, was appointed in 2021 as the Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture. From 2004 to 2009, he was a member of the European Parliament, then a member of the German Bundestag from 2013 (Gehrke 2021). Previous examples illustrate that Muslim influence is obviously increasing in the European political sphere. However, their influence is still relatively small, and maybe it will become significant in the very long run or perhaps never if Western societies continue with successful integration policies.

On the other hand, across Europe, democracies are increasingly under pressure from right-wing parties and movements that often combine radical anti-immigrant and Islamophobic positions with populist rhetoric (HBS 2015). The tide of right-wing populism in Europe has been steadily rising in the twenty-first century. In the French presidential elections of May 2017, far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, of the National Rally, got 34% of votes, the party's best electoral result ever. In September 2017, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) won 12.6% of the vote and entered the Bundestag for the first time with an anti-euro and anti-immigration platform. This election happened in a context already marked by anti-migrant demonstrations by far-right political movements. In October 2017, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), founded by a former SS officer in the 1950s, won 26% of the vote. Also in 2017, the far-right Volya Movement entered the Bulgarian parliament for the first time, and, in the Netherlands, the anti-Islam Party for Freedom became the second-largest party in the House of Representatives. In March 2018, the anti-establishment Five Star Movement became Italy's largest party and formed a coalition government with the far-right League party. In Sweden, the far-right Sweden Democrats have steadily increased their share of the vote since 2010, gaining 17.6% in the 2018 elections and becoming the third largest party in the country's parliament (Sandrin 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Cultural and religious differences that are entailed by migrations are becoming a serious political and security challenge for decision-makers in European countries, as it is the region with the largest number of accepted migrants. Since population growth is accompanied by an increasing number

of migrations from economically least developed to developed countries, primarily in Europe, a trend of changing the demographic composition of the European population has been created. Taking into account the low rate of natural increase of Christians, who are the majority population in Europe, and the high rate of natural increase of the Muslim population, who are increasingly populating Europe, it is obvious that the demographic composition of the population will be significantly changed and that the Muslims will become a strong economic and political factor in the European countries. Their political engagement and involvement in the political lives of the migration destination countries through political organisations and parties is already becoming evident.

Notwithstanding the development of a policy that includes the assimilation of migrants, Western countries are striving to win the battle against the deeply rooted traditional, cultural, and religious characteristics of the Muslim population, but it can still result in a quarter of the European population being Muslim in 50 years. Based on data analysis and migration development trends, the authors concluded that regardless of the armed conflicts and poverty in the MENA region and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the natural increase rate of Muslims will continue to grow exponentially, and it is possible that the Muslim and Christian populations will equalise at about 30% of the total population globally. Considering that Christians today make up 72% of the total population of Europe, in 50 years, due to the decline of the natural increase rate of the Christian population and due to the growing migration and the natural increase rate of the Muslim population, based on the analysed trends, it is possible to assume that Christians will make up less than 50% of the population of Europe, while Muslims will make up about 23%, and the same number (25%) is expected for atheists and other non-religious groups.

Regardless of the attempts made by Western European countries to assimilate minorities by implementing social policies, it cannot be expected that all Muslims would renounce their religious identity, especially considering the fact that one half of this population puts more trust in the religious customs than in the laws of the host country. On the other hand, the trust reported by the European population towards Muslims is inconsistent, and it is difficult to project what their relationship will be like in the future, especially considering the strength of extreme political parties in European countries. Regional institutions of European countries should improve the statistical coverage of migrants as well as economic, political, and other relations with countries of migrant origin. The goal is to talk more about the integration of migrants, greater respect for their rights, education, and the fight against discrimination and xenophobia. Migrations actually

represent a process of connecting and integrating people into a single, although not highly compact or coherent, whole, the consequences of which must be considered from several long-term aspects, not only economic ones but also from political and security perspectives. Migration effects depend on the social context and the policy decisions that shape it.

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## **ПОЛИТИЧКИ ИЗАЗОВИ САВРЕМЕНИХ МИГРАЦИОНИХ ТРЕНДОВА У ЕВРОПИ**

*Апстракт:* Убрзан раст становништва у последњих 70 година константно је праћен све већим миграционим токовима. У периоду од 1950. до 2020. године становништво Европе је порасло са око 547 милиона на 741 милион, док се муслимански удео у овој популацији учетворостручио са 10,7 на 42,7 милиона људи. Такав експоненцијални раст муслиманске популације могао би да представља политичке изазове за Европу, посебно за земље западне Европе које су најчешће крајња дестинација за мигранте из разних делова света, пре свега из северне Африке и Блиског истока. Овај рад има за циљ да анализира трендове у миграцијама и стопу природног прираштаја како би се приближно проценило да ли ће демографски изгледи Европе претрпети велику промену у наредних 50 година. Методом квантитативне анализе садржаја процењено је да ће се хришћанска популација смањити за око 25 милиона због старења становништва и пада наталитета, док ће се муслиманска популација, услед миграција и природног прираштаја, повећати за око 200 милиона. Закључак је да постоје индиције да ће то променити не само демографске изгледе већ и европски политички и безбедносни идентитет или ће у случају промена које би се оцениле као контролисане, довести само до неких промена у миграционој политици.

*Кључне речи:* становништво; миграције; религија; Европа; политика; промене.