

# Review of the position paper: Germany and France

## Strengths

- The paper highlighted and summarized the issues that the Union is facing in the brink of the MFF 2021 negotiations. It addresses the lack of a common migration policy and political turmoil and cleavages among the member states.
- They are right to point out that European Union needs a long-term solution to the problem of migration that will suit everyone's needs and not worsen the already present political cleavage.
- Indeed the importance of other areas such as FTONTEX, the external borders of the EU, human trafficking should be noted. However, one should not ignore the other pressing issues including climate change, innovation, and, of course migration, which they briefly return to by the end of the paper.
- It is very reasonable to reopen the negotiations on quotas and the Dublin regulation because, as they mention in the paper, it was previously unsuccessful but has a strong potential.
- Unfortunately, it is a true fact that the majority of the refugees whose applications have been denied are not sent back and are only expected to leave the Schengen area. It becomes not only difficult to keep track of denied applicants but also it becomes virtually impossible to enforce the decision. As it is mentioned in the paper, the EU has to decide on a common policy for returning denied applicants back and encourage legal and safer routes for migration.

## Weaknesses

- There is a fair amount of redundant repetition when it comes to the need for a collective (or as they say "coordinated") approach to migration.
- The paper also discusses the preferences of other states -- and opens a space for further comments -- which seems irrelevant as they are representing Germany and France and not the EC. Moreover, it appears as if Germany and France still have the impression that they

are the main players of the Union (i.e., the logic of the European Coal and Steel Community)

- While arguing for a united and prosperous European Union they support a moderate approach to the migration issue. Regardless of their preferences, the position should be stated more clearly rather than just claiming a middle ground
- Imposing conditionality or introducing new ones does not necessarily create conflicts. Naturally, it will spark a discussion but that is how the Union functions. If the reason for not seeking further conditionality is the fear of escalation of conflicts then not imposing conditionality will provoke the other side and at the end still cause disputes.
- Germany and France very clearly stated that it was never an option to make a country take in migrants against their will. While it is true that national governments should have a say, as an EU member state, countries are required to share responsibilities and not only gain profits. European Union is based on values of solidarity, fraternity and liberty, and when a member state does not want to offer help in crisis then they go against the very fundamental values that all countries have agreed upon when joining the Union.
- It is misleading to think of states as entities that can be easily nudged by “rewards” when they fulfill their requirements or behave in a manner that is expected from them. However, it is true that no state has the duty to take over the responsibility of accepting migrants without having the costs covered (at least partially). Thus instead of rewards, the EU budget should allow for remuneration to states that accept refugees, which should vary according to the scale of migration in a given state.