

The Political Background of the Refugee Crisis in Europe

2 June 2016 (Thursday), 9.45 – 13.30

Académie Royale - Salle Ilya Prigogine

Rue Ducale 1, Brussels

Time	Program	Speakers
9.45-10.00	Registration and welcome coffee	
10.00 – 10.15	Opening statement by FEPS	
10.15 – 10.45	Presentation: Policy Solutions' study on the political background of the refugee crisis in Central and Eastern Europe	Tamás Boros Policy Solutions, Co-director, Head of Strategy
10.45 – 12.15	Expert panel: The political and social context of the refugee crisis	Introductory remarks and moderation: Hedwig Giusto Senior Policy Advisor, FEPS Panel discussants: Eszter Zalan EUobserver, Journalist Elsa Laino Solidar, Social Services Coordinator Julien Zalc TNS opinion, Consultant
12.15 - 12.30	Presentation: How Central and Eastern European countries have handled the refugee crisis? Why CEE countries' approach is different than that of the Western European countries?	Tanja Fajon MEP, Slovenia (S&D), Co-chair of PES Democracy Network
12.30 – 13.00	Q + A	
13.00 - 13.30	Light lunch	



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The purpose of this joint FEPS – Policy Solutions conference is to review how politicians and the society in Central and Eastern Europe have responded to the current refugee crisis.

Undoubtedly, practically overnight the refugee crisis has emerged as the most important political and public policy challenge facing Europe today. Despite the warnings, what we observe now is an EU that was ill-prepared for the currently experienced magnitude of the problem, and member states that lack the capacity to take decisive action. Moreover, the EU is far from acting in a concerted manner, with striking divisions along cultural and regional lines, and a membership that is deeply at odds especially concerning the refugee numbers that the countries should have to grapple with. The countries that have taken the brunt of the humanitarian pressure have urged for a rapid and coordinated response to distribute the burden more equally, while many of the rest – the Central and Eastern European countries among them – are wary of the proposed joint solutions.

The FEPS – Policy Solutions conference will investigate the political and communication roots of the current crisis; the characteristic national responses in the Central European region, and in particular in Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland; and the impact the crisis is likely to have on the already substantial populist movement across Europe.

The half-day conference will feature three sections. After the opening statement by FEPS, Tamás Boros from Policy Solutions will present their study on the political background of the refugee crisis. Then, in a panel discussion a migration-expert, a public opinion researcher and a journalist will discuss why this topic has become the most disputed political issue of the year. They will reveal the social and political rationale behind the European countries' different approaches of the crisis. After the panel discussion, Tanja Fajon, co-chair of PES Democracy Network will speak about why CEE countries' approach is different than that of the Western European countries. The conference will be closed by a Q&A session.

The conference is open for all interested experts, journalists and politicians.