

The Mediterranean Migration Crisis: The North East Hotspot Policy

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Abstract : Confronted with the human tragedy unfolding in the Mediterranean during the 2011-2016 period, the European Union introduced for the first time the “hotspot approach”, the establishment of facilities for initial reception, identification registration, and fingerprinting of asylum seekers and migrants arriving in the EU by sea, at the frontline Member States. However, the lack of a comprehensive collective policy on migration management and border security left the Mediterranean Member States, mainly Italy, Greece, and Cyprus, struggling to overcome these challenges. The current study sheds light on the implementation of the hotspot approach as the frontispiece of the European response to the migration challenges, which, limited to the operational and financial support of the hosting member states, leads to heterogeneous burden-sharing. Within this framework, it highlights the fact that the implementation of the hotspots as a panacea carries the risk of transforming the Mediterranean member states into giant hotspots with unpredictable consequences for the future of the Schengen area.

Keywords : asylum, burden sharing, hotspots, migration management policy, Schengen area

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