



ISSUE 09

# RISK RADAR

2019

## NEW MIGRATION TO EUROPE

&  
THE HORN IN TURMOIL  
&  
TREATS TO MULTILATERALISM



Last month, Turkish President Erdogan threatened to “open the gates” to Europe for the 3.6 million Syrian migrants it hosts. Erdogan called on Europe to increase support for Turkey’s efforts to ensure security in Syria’s Idlib to avoid further migration. Under the 2016 agreement with the EU, Turkey has curbed the number of migrants reaching Europe over the Aegean Sea, but only €2.22 billion of the pledged €6 billion of aid were disbursed to improve living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Erdogan’s threat to open the floodgates could pose major problems for a Europe still recovering from the latest migrant crisis.

While the EU is still struggling with the migrant crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war, another frontier is posing similar challenges. Besides supporting Turkey, the EU has funded the Libyan Coast Guard to keep migrant boats from North Africa away from the continent. As a result, tens of thousands of migrants are trapped in Libya, where they live in dire conditions in cramped detention centers, sometimes being sold as slaves or forced into prostitution. In a [New York Times interview](#), Camille Le Coz, an expert with the Migration Policy Institute in Brussels says: “European countries face a dilemma. They do not want to welcome more migrants from Libya and worry about creating pull factors, but at the same time they can’t leave people trapped in detention centers.” The bloc’s approach to migrants has been sharply criticized by humanitarian and refugee-rights groups, not only for the often-deplorable conditions of detention centers, but also for the small number of migrants that are actually able to gain asylum on the continent. Now, as a way to keep migrants out, Europe plans to sign an agreement with Rwanda, which will take in about 500 migrants evacuated from Libya and host them until they are settled in new homes or sent back to their countries of origin.

Possible implications:

- The question remains how sustainable Europe’s “solutions” to keeping migrants away are. Especially since steep increases of migration in the near future are not improbable. [Research](#) indicates that climatic conditions, i.e. severe droughts and related armed conflict, already contributed significantly to rising numbers of asylum seekers between 2011 and 2015. By mid-century, there could be over 140 million climate-migrants, mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa, as a result of tougher crop-growing conditions, poverty, erratic food prices, and conflicts over scarce resources forcing people from their homes. We’ve previously described the risk of [climate migration](#) in the Risk Radar.
- Migration rhetoric will further color the political landscape in European countries. Erdogan’s threat shows that despite the fact that fewer migrants and refugees are entering Europe, anti-migrant rhetoric is persistent.

# 1. New migration to Europe

Although the European migration crisis seems to have had its peak in 2015, last month has shown that the crisis is far from over. The situation in the Middle East has become [more volatile](#), creating ripe conditions for new conflicts that could drive groups of migrants out of the region, especially now that Turkey has launched an offensive into North Syria.

The Greek islands, the busiest European entry point for migrants and the location of Europe’s biggest migration camps, experienced a [surge in arrivals](#) of migrants over the past month. A total of nearly 10,000 migrants arrived in Greece last month, the highest number in the three years since the EU and Turkey implemented a deal to shut off the Aegean migrant route. Although this is still a fraction of the number of migrants arriving in Greece at the peak of the refugee crisis, the camps are already filled beyond capacity. The EU has been strongly criticized over conditions in Greece’s largest refugee camp Moria, where 13,000 people are living in a facility designed for 3,000. Other Greek islands, including Kos and Samos, are also struggling with over-capacity. Recently, a fire in Moria killed a woman and child, triggering protests among migrants. Following this incident, the UN called for migrants to be immediately transferred to other European countries, but so far, the redistribution of migrants across the continent has been sluggish. This has triggered [France and Italy to call for a new system](#) to automatically redistribute migrants across the EU.

**RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 1: TENSIONS THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE-EAST, LARGE-SCALE MIGRATION**

## 2. The Horn in turmoil

The Horn of Africa is in turmoil. The region stretches from the north of Sudan to Somalia, including Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti, and onwards to the Somali and Kenyan coast. Multiple developments are causing increased tensions in the region.

First, although the region has long been an arena of great power competition, today it sees a new rivalry playing out on its shores. Over the last years, the Red Sea area, which encompasses the Horn of Africa on the one hand, and the Gulf States on the other, has regained international attention. The Arab Uprisings resulted in a leadership vacuum in Middle Eastern states such as Syria, Egypt and Iraq in 2011 and 2012, causing the leaders of the Gulf States to show more assertive leadership. As they began to look for new spaces onto which to project power, many Gulf States turned to the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa because of these areas' enormous economic potential. All the Gulf States attempt to legitimize their presence by saying they're pursuing stability in the region. However, many new Gulf-Horn relationships are highly asymmetrical and could further [destabilize fragile local politics](#). Meanwhile, African leaders as well as Gulf and Western allies have only begun to discuss how to prevent the increased competition in the region from resulting in conflict.

Second, Sudan is in the midst of a revolution. Sudan's military junta and opposition have agreed to form a civilian-led administration to steer a transition toward free and fair elections. But the generals are inexperienced and the transition is a complex one. And with repeated mass strikes (million-man march in June) Sudan's citizens have shown that they will not accept superficial change, nor a return to the old ways. And six weeks after the transitional power-sharing deal, the Sudanese [don't see any changes](#).

Third, Al-Shabaab's actions are destabilizing Somalia, a country with an already weak government. The al-Qaeda-affiliated militant group forms a potent threat to Somalia's internationally recognized central government, frequently carrying out bomb and gun attacks against Somali military and other targets. The Global Terrorism Index lists al-Shabaab among the deadliest terror groups globally. It demands a strict form of Islamic government or caliphate to replace existing state authorities they perceive as secular, thus destabilizing local politics. Furthermore, last month, Al-Shabaab [attacked a U.S. military base](#) near Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, and detonated a car bomb targeting a European Union military convoy.

Fourth, Ethiopia is undergoing a difficult political transformation. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came into office in 2018, has pushed to liberalize his country's economy as well as its political landscape. But this summer, rights groups voiced concern when several activists, journalists and politicians [were arrested](#), as anti-terror laws following the killings of government officials were still being used. Ethiopia's process of democratization remains a precarious one and has been neither linear nor peaceful. But the success of the process is of paramount importance to the region, since the country serves as a powerhouse and an [isle of hope](#) for the rest of the region.

Possible implications:

- Instability increases the region's vulnerability in the current scramble for Africa. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have expanded their presence in the Horn. Either trying to reduce their dependence on oil by investing in African markets, investing in infrastructure on the continent to increase trade or increasing investments in agriculture in order to secure their own food security. Another reason is the Gulf States' aim to improve their relationships to China through economic cooperation in the Horn. Therewith, the U.S.' position as dominant power player (and mainly as peacekeeper) in the Horn is challenged. The Horn thus falls prey to the competition of external powers.
- If instability increases and results in conflict, this might spark mass migration away from a region with a large and fast-growing population.

**RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 2: SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, LARGE-SCALE MIGRATION**

## 3. Treats to multilateralism

Multilateralism is under rising pressure. As the strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China poses a further and ongoing sharp challenge to international organizations, some speak of a [crisis of multilateralism](#). Several forces have increased pressure on the multilateral system and point to a global order in which the only solutions are transactional rather than dictated by internationally agreed upon rules.

First, as we [wrote](#) before, the world is witnessing an increased number of international sanctions to pursue foreign policy objectives. Especially the U.S. has been relying on sanctions [more frequently](#). In light of the rise of China as a challenge to U.S. hegemony, it can only be expected that the U.S. will impose more sanctions and tariffs. But other countries are imposing a lot of sanctions as well. Think of [Japan's sanctions on South Korea](#), in line with the rising tensions between the countries. In general, the rule of the "game" of sanctions seems to be that stronger powers impose their will on weaker counterparts, a dynamic that should be less common in a world that is built around multilateral systems.

Second, the U.S. is paralyzing the World Trade Organization, the main arbiter in global trade. The most immediate threat to the functioning of the WTO is the stalling of the dispute settlement process in the appellate body of the organization. As the White House deliberately blocks appointments to it, no new members are approved, and the body will stop functioning by December 2019. In fact, the functioning of the WTO has been under pressure for years; take the Doha Development Round trade negotiations that began in 2001 and aimed at lowering trade barriers around the world, but never led to an agreement. As a result, the WTO is considered less and less of an effective tool by the U.S. when it comes to realizing its own trade interests, leading it to take other routes to negotiate with countries.

Possible implications:

- Shifting from a rule-based system in governing trade disputes to one based on power and bilateral negotiations will result in more trade [uncertainty in the global economy](#). This, in turn, will contribute to a slowdown in trade and manufacturing activity, higher financial-market volatility and currency instability, declining capital flows to emerging economies, lower investor confidence, business spending, and productivity. The World Bank and the IMF continue to revise downward their economic growth forecasts.
- The rise of China is less a sign that there is a new sole hegemon in the making than a harbinger of a future multipolar world order in which different countries will lead in different domains. [National champions](#) will become of greater strategic importance to countries. This poses a risk to countries and regions (such as the EU, Japan) that heavily depend on the functioning of the multilateral system at the [end of the Atlantic era](#). They will have to find new allies in a more fluid world order. Even the U.S., despite its America-first rhetoric and protectionist stance, is actively creating new relationships in order to hedge against China's rise. For instance, over the past two years, the U.S. has been actively engaging with the EU and Japan in a trilateral format on U.S. terms.
- A shift in global power relations will pose a normative challenge to the current multilateral system. Rising Asian superpowers will show contrast to normative Western frames that underlie the multilateral system as it is, such as human rights and democratic values.

**RISKS MARKED ON THE RISK RADAR AS NUMBER 3: PROTECTIONISM, POLICY UNCERTAINTY**



# RISK RADAR

## EUROPE

### SEPTEMBER 19

The potential political, sociological, economic and technological threats.

### PRIORITY OF RISK

Is a determination of the likelihood of occurrence and the estimated impact.

### NEW RISK



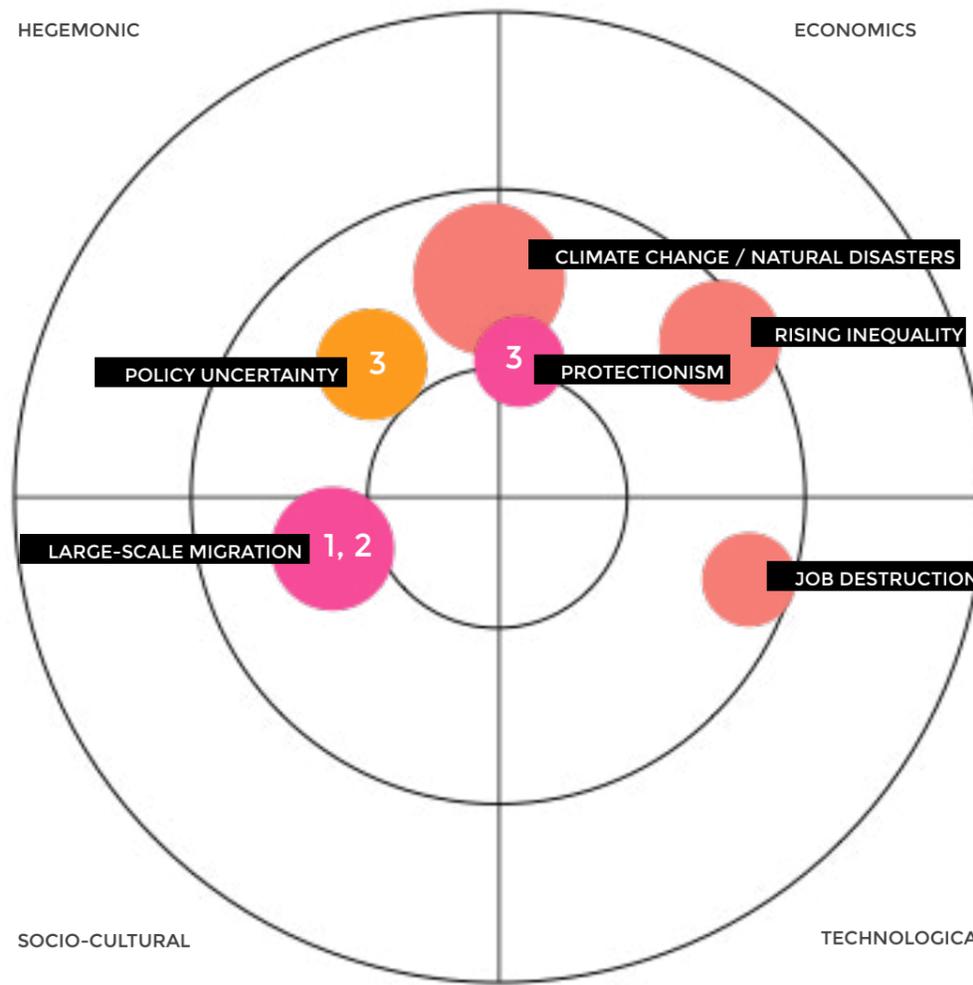
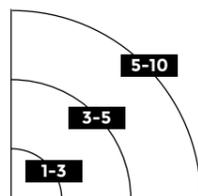
### ESTIMATED IMPACT



### LIKELIHOOD OCCURENCE



### TIME HORIZON (IN YEARS)



### KEY RISH SHIFTS

1. New migration to europe
2. The Horn in turmoil
3. Treats to multilateralism

### OTHER TOP EUROPE RISKS

- Opioid crisis
- AI failure and arms race
- Deteriorating relationship Russia and the West
- Mental health issues
- Weak southern European economies
- Spread of infectious disease
- Unrest and regime change in the periphery of EU
- Pension Crisis
- Declining internet freedom
- Weak Southern European Economies
- Policy uncertainty
- Friction over Arctic Sea
- Anti-establishment parties come to power
- Terrorism
- Secular stagnation
- Global debt glut
- Digital Infrastructure Failures

# RISK RADAR

## WORLD

### SEPTEMBER 19

The potential political, sociological, economic and technological threats.

### PRIORITY OF RISK

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### NEW RISK



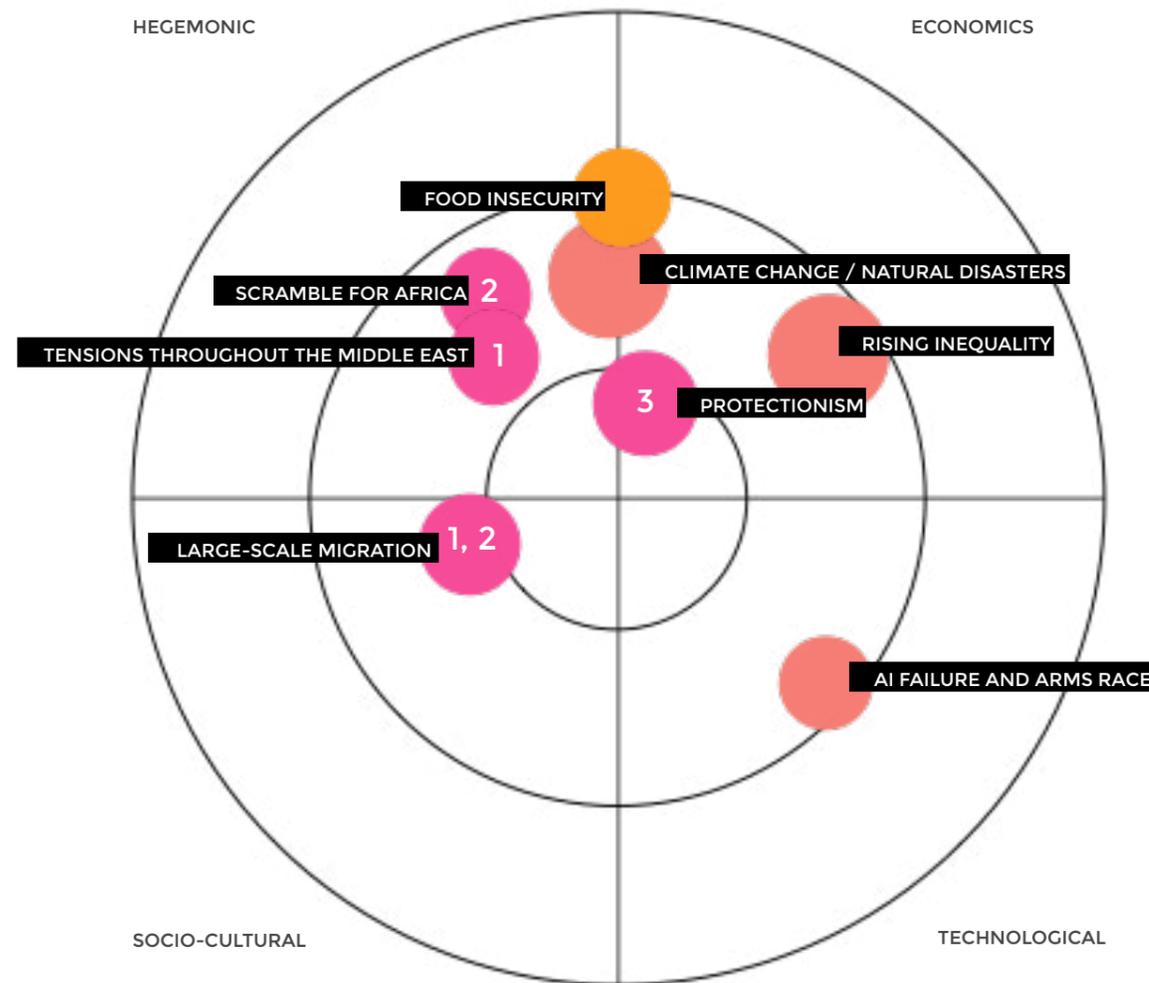
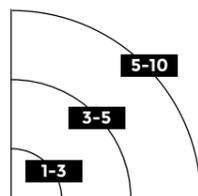
### ESTIMATED IMPACT



### LIKELIHOOD OCCURENCE



### TIME HORIZON (IN YEARS)



### KEY RISH SHIFTS

1. New migration to europe
2. The Horn in turmoil
3. Treats to multilateralism

### OTHER TOP WORLD RISKS

- Opioid crisis
- Deteriorating relations Russia and the West
- Resource nationalism
- Mental health issues
- EM insolvency
- Infocalypse
- Protectionism / reform LatAm
- Spread of infectious disease
- Competition South Pacific
- Pension crisis
- Global debt glut
- Implosion North Korean State
- Water crises
- Territorial disputes South China Sea
- African terrorism
- Friction over Arctic Sea
- Digital infrastructure failures
- Declining internet freedom



**➤ FreedomLab**