

# GENERAL PERCEPTION

This block aims to evaluate the perceptions of respondents of the migration and refugee situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Questions seek to capture the perception of its causes, its consequences and of the policy responses implemented so far. There are also questions elaborated to provide some prospective insights on human movements as well as their impact on the regional stability.

## Main findings

- Destabilisation following the war in Libya and Syria and its regional impact are perceived as the two main elements explaining the present migration and refugee situation.
- Results obtained on the lack of sustainable livelihoods in origin countries could indicate that structural elements are also important and would continue to shape the migration dynamics in the Mediterranean beyond the refugee crisis.
- Perceptions on how countries are affected by different kinds of human movements vary depending on the position of the respondents in the human movement geography.
- In the mid-term, the Syrian war and the subsequent destabilisation of the region are considered as the main element affecting the Eastern route and, to a lesser extent, also the Central one. More structural features, such as the socioeconomic situation in the origin countries, would be of higher importance in the Western route.
- Overall, there is limited enthusiasm among the respondents with the policy response to the migration and refugee situation. Only those countries under the label “Main EU countries of destination” (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria) receive more than 50% of answers assessing their policy response as good or very good.
- The first EU countries of arrival obtain a heterogeneous assessment, while transit countries in Europe receive rather a negative one.
- In almost all cases, the capacity of governments is seen as the main driver conditioning policy responses, except in the main transit countries in the EU where short-term political and electoral considerations, and even the concern to create a “pull factor” effect for further migrants, are more salient.
- Marginalisation of refugee communities is seen as the main source of potential instability followed by potential tensions between the local and refugee population.
- Concerning the international refugee system, together with the effective protection of refugees, respondents believe it should also somehow support communities providing shelter, particularly those in neighbouring areas of the conflict countries.

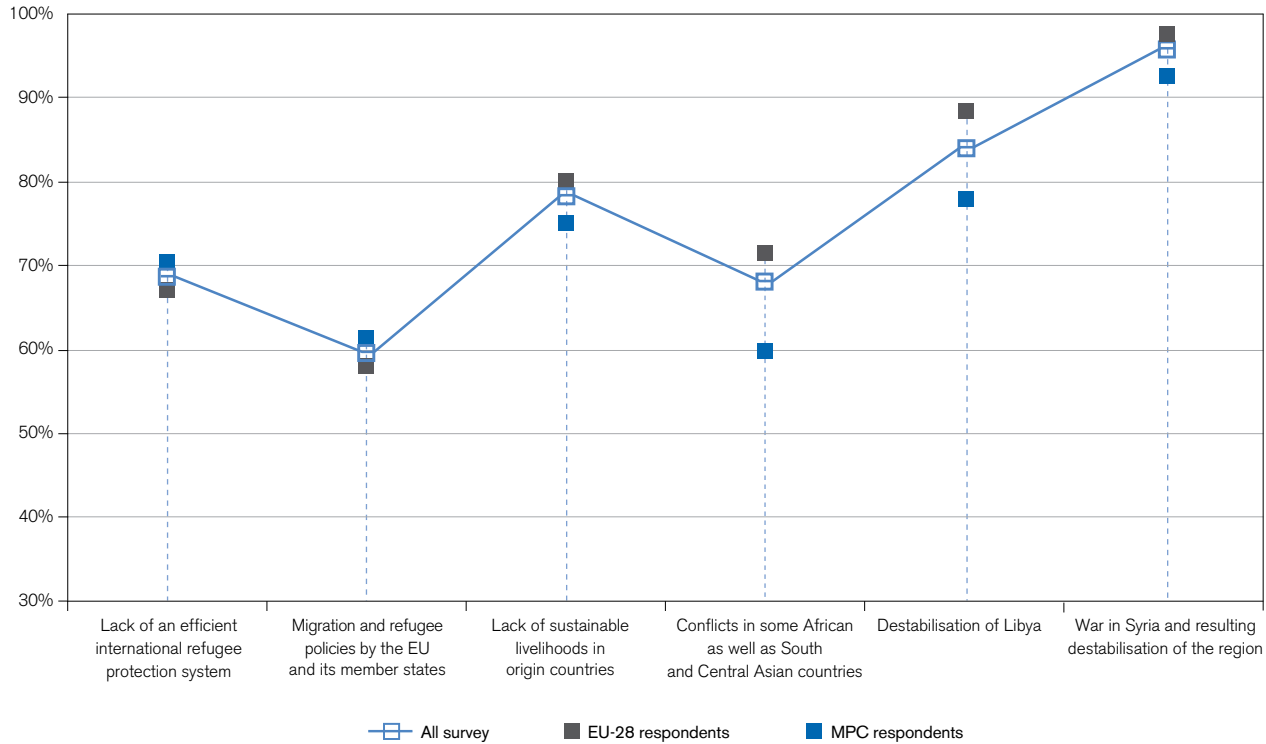
The first question aimed at assessing respondents' analysis regarding the causes of the present migration and refugee situation in the region. Overall, it appears that destabilisation in Libya and the war in Syria and its regional impact are identified as the two main explicative elements.

Yet, all enumerated causes in the question obtained relatively high percentages with only limited differences among them (see Graph 1). In turn, some differences between answers from Northern and Southern countries of the Mediterranean, and according to professional affiliation of respondents introduce some nuances.

As a general trend, EU-28 respondents gave higher percentages to the importance of elements related to regional conflicts and more generally to the situation in origin countries, while there

is more convergence when it comes to those elements related to the management of human movements (international refugee system and EU policies).

**Graph 1: The migration and refugee situation in the Mediterranean is unprecedented.**  
**To what extent do the following elements explain this situation? Respondents by group of countries.**  
 (The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 1

“Lack of sustainable livelihoods in origin countries” ranked in third position and could point to the perception that structural elements are important and will persist beyond the present situation. Here are some examples of complementary comments respondents came up with:

The war in Syria has definitely affected the migration and refugee situation. However, the situation of migrants was also very bad before the war and a lot of policies has affected this either from the EU side or from countries of origin. Lack of democracy and poor economic conditions have pushed people to move out from their countries.

Lebanese respondent

Continuing high rates of demographic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, failures of development aid, corresponding governance failures of African countries, poor education, loss of traditional know-how, depletion of natural resources, globalisation pushing for opening borders and free movement of people, unclear signals sent by EU migration policy.

French respondent

Le phénomène migratoire a pour origine l'absence de démocratie dans les pays d'origine qui profite aux riches et appauvrissent les nantis. Les conflits ont contribué davantage au chômage de la population qui cherche à échapper au joug de la pauvreté. Cette situation est favorisée par la politique migratoire de l'UE qui pour des raisons humanitaires accueille des migrants.

Moroccan respondent

In fourth place, and with scarcely no differences among respondents by geographical origin, there is the lack of an efficient international refugee protection system. Some open-answers complement this result pointing to a complex situation with multiple elements interacting between each other.

Lack of an efficient international refugee protection system is critical in the neighbouring countries to conflict situations, where most of refugees are hosted (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, etc.): due to deterioration of situations in refugee camps, persons are forced to flee onwards. In addition, I believe one of the reasons is increased smuggling efforts.

Lithuanian respondent

Yes, EU's refuge policies and the lack of an efficient protection system affect the movement of people toward EU. And yes, destabilization in the region(s) is also a critical factor. However, even though these two factors could be minimized, the refugee problem would not end, due mainly to two factors: poverty in the countries sending refugees, and the attractiveness of EU for these people.

Turkish respondent

Hard to separate the elements from each other. War in Syria and destabilisation of Libya are factors with huge impact in the short term. Conflicts in Africa and Central Asia are more like constant factors more or less constantly in the background, pushing people towards Europe. EU policies and the lack of international refugee system are making things worse.

Swedish respondent

There are different categories of (aspiring/ potential) migrants, whose motivation is related to either conflict (now in particular Syria) or (prolonged) lack of sustainable livelihood in the countries of origin – or both. This is though no real “news”, their situation should have been considered on a much earlier stage; proper assistance then could have prevented to an extent the present crisis.

Jordan respondent

EU migration and refugee policies still lack coherence and capacity to deal humanely with the current situation. That said, the international refugee system as a whole has been unable to address the political challenges that underpin the current situation nor has it been able to provide sustainable humanitarian assistance to those in need at the scale required.

United Kingdom respondent

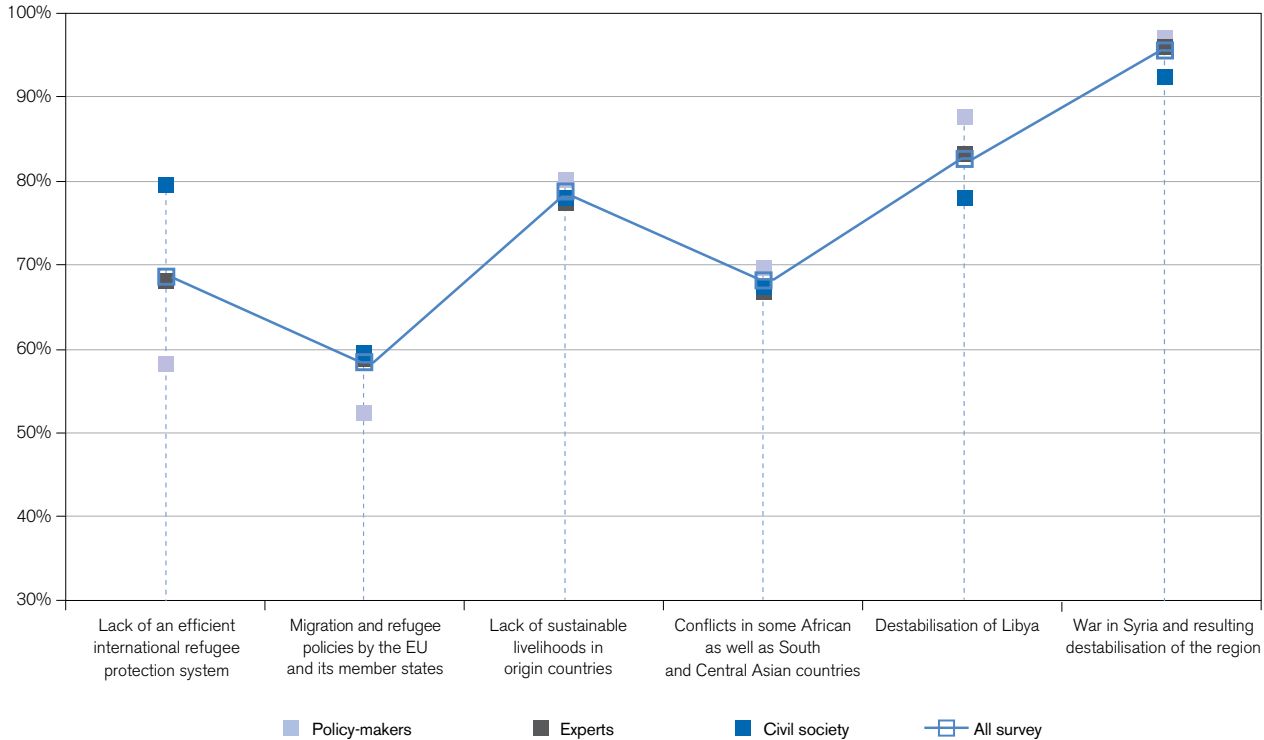
Conflicts in African and in South and Central Asian countries are in fifth position, but here discrepancy between North and South is important, since the proportion of EU-28 respondents considering it a relevant element is 10 percentage points higher than that of MPC countries. It is important to note that this distinctive perception can also be found in one of the top explicative elements, “destabilisation in Libya” (see Graph 1).

Differences in results according to the professional affiliation of respondents deserve also some attention. While expert answers<sup>1</sup> show rather similar patterns as the overall survey results, answers from policy-makers and civil society present some – limited – degree of diversity. Policy-makers tend to give less importance to management-related elements, while for civil society respondents, conflict-related elements are somehow less significant.

1. In this sense, experts are to be understood as academic or think-tank members which account for 54% of all respondents. This category is not to be confused with experts in migration issues. These are participants that declared to have an advanced knowledge on migration management. In blocks 2 and 4 some specific questions are addressed only to these migration experts.

In the same line, it is also worth noting the perception on the lack of an efficient international refugee protection system. In this case, 80% of civil society respondents consider it to a high or very high extent, while the percentage of policy-makers answering this way stays below 60% (see Graph 2).

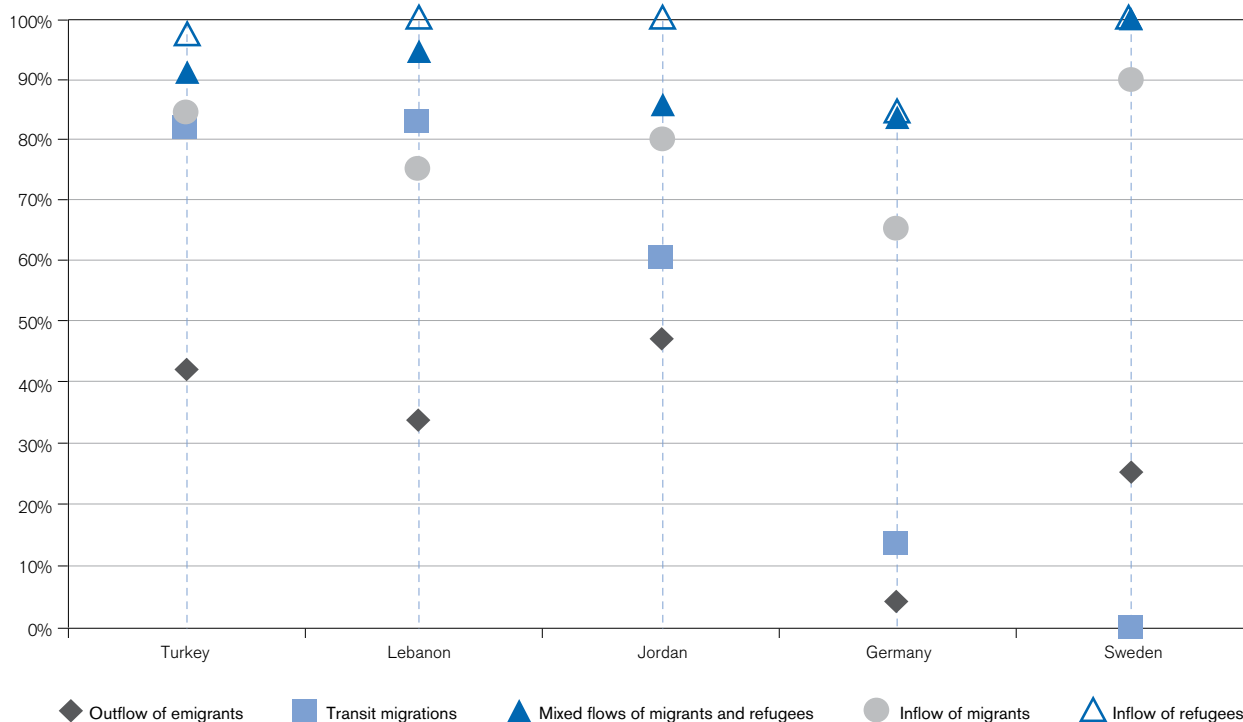
**Graph 2: The migration and refugee situation in the Mediterranean is unprecedented.**  
**To what extent do the following elements explain this situation? Respondents by institutional affiliation.**  
 (The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 1

When the focus turns to how specific countries are affected by different kinds of human movements, perceptions of respondents vary depending on their situation in the human movements' geography. Inflow of refugees is the main answer in countries surrounding the Syrian war (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) where there is also a significant perception of mixed flows of migrants and refugees. Respondents from Germany and Sweden (two EU countries receiving 80% of arrivals in the UE continent) perceive also the inflow of refugees as the category of human movement affecting most those countries to high and very high extent while inflow of migrants is still of relevant significance. For these latter countries, mixed flows are seldom mentioned (see Graph 3).

**Graph 3: To what extent is your country affected by the following human movements?**  
(The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 3

Open-ended answers from respondents illustrate how concerned Syria's direct neighbouring countries are with the constant arrival of mixed flows.<sup>2</sup>

Lebanon is the first country in the world receiving such a high percentage of refugees and this is having a lot of negative impact on both populations (refugees and local communities). In addition to refugees, we have a very big number of migrants coming from Asia or Africa and instead of decreasing with the influx of refugees, the number of migrants is still increasing.

Lebanese respondent

Approximately 3 million people have sought refuge in Turkey running away from war in Syria. Some of them live in refugee camps but a bigger number live and work in cities on their own resources. It is unknown whether they will return back to Syria after the war ends as the situation continues for a longer time. About 60 thousand of them have received Turkish citizenship.

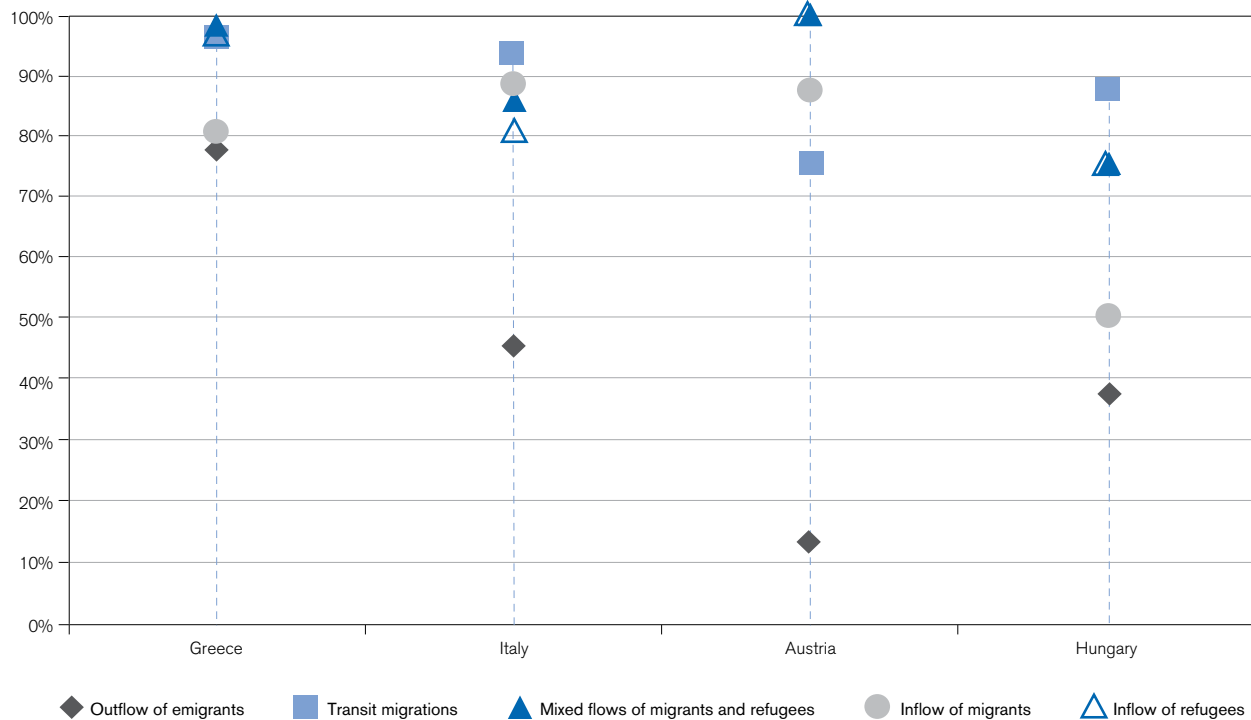
Turkish respondent

In first EU countries of arrival such as Italy and Greece, results indicate a more complex situation where mixed, transit migration and refugee flows are equally mentioned. Results in Greece show a bit less of concern about inflow of migrants while in Italy transit migrations are considered to have a bigger impact than the inflow of refugees (see Graph 4).

<sup>2</sup> These comments connect with question 6 on potential instability, first option among all respondents is the risk of marginalization of refugee communities (see p. 94 of the report).

**Graph 4: To what extent is your country affected by the following human movements?**

(The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent answers)

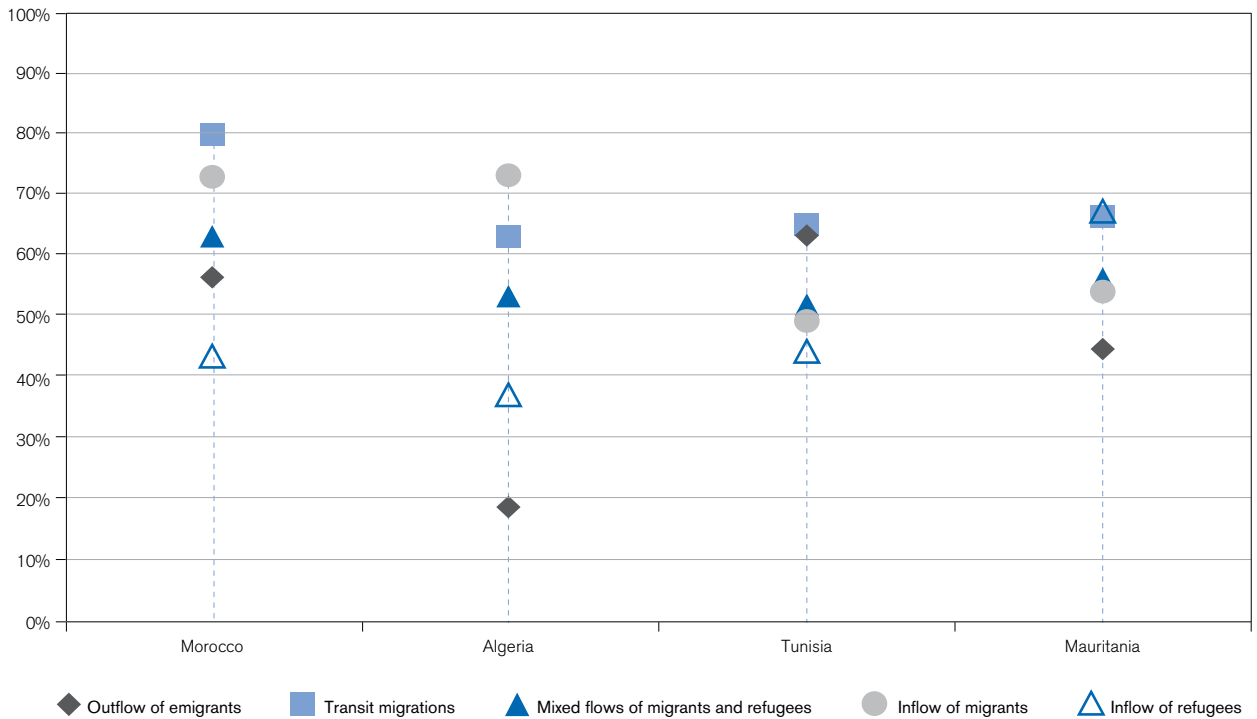


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 3

Finally, transit countries such as Austria and Hungary further illustrate the complexity of the present situation and how it is perceived. Austria's results reflect its double condition of transit and destination country for refugees. In Hungary transit migrations are perceived as most important.

Maghreb countries perceive the situation in other terms. As Graph 5 shows, there is more concern with transit migrations and inflow of migrants than with refugee arrival. In the case of Morocco and Tunisia, even the outflow of migrants is more important than refugee inflow. However, answers from Mauritania suggest that refugee inflow is important, showing the persistence of refugees other than those related to the Syrian war.

**Graph 5: To what extent is your country affected by the following human movements?**  
(The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 3

La Mauritanie est directement concernée par le phénomène migratoire car elle accueille depuis quelques années plus de 60 000 réfugiés maliens sur son sol. Elle est devenue un pays de destination et aussi un pays de transit pour des milliers de candidats à la migration venant des pays africains et du moyen orient.

Mauritanian respondent

Le nord algérien est très attractif pour les migrants et réfugiés sub-sahariens, ils s'y installent et regardent peu l'outre-mer. Cette situation devient un fardeau pour le pays qui souffre déjà d'une crise économique relative à la chute du prix du pétrole.

Algerian respondent

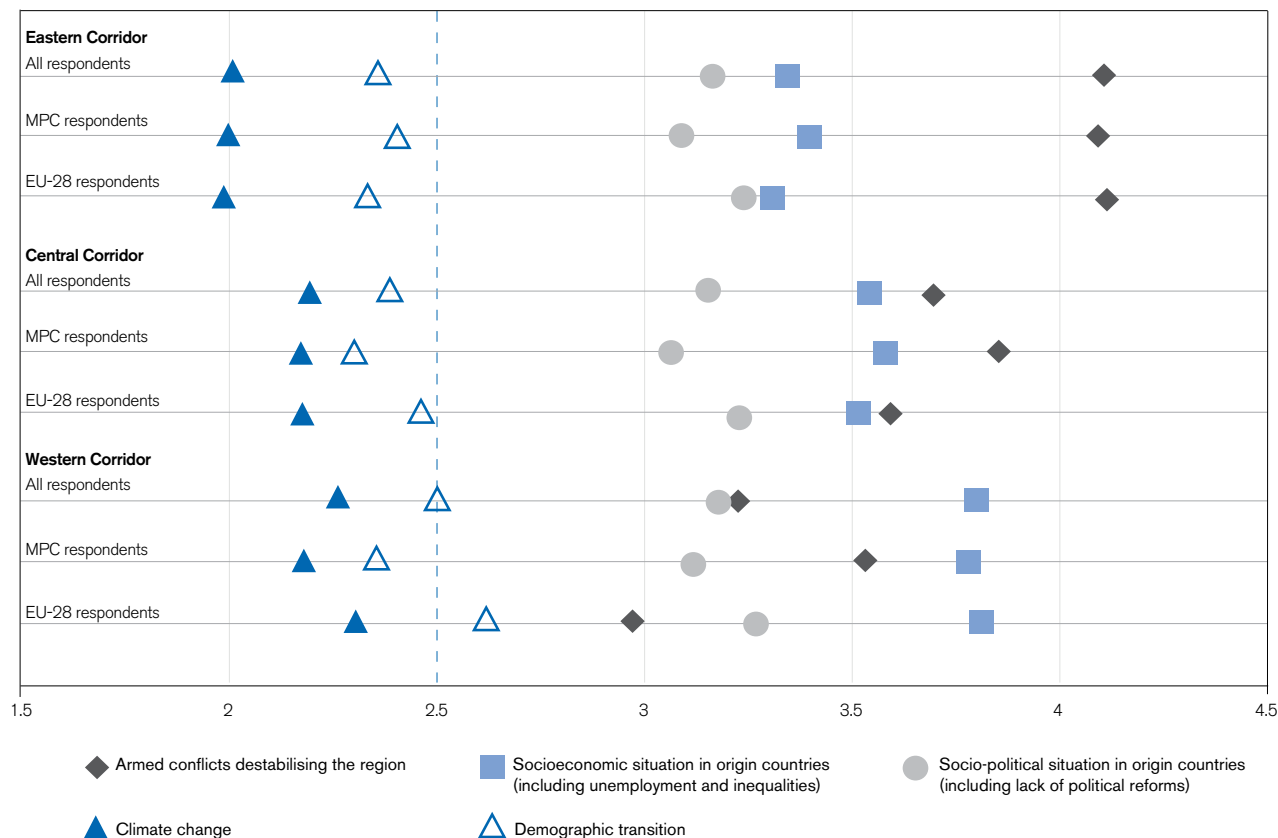
To the question on the drivers of migrations over the next 10 years, respondents were required to answer according to the different migration Corridors in the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup>

Graph 6 shows a rather clear picture of how the Syrian war and the destabilization of the region are affecting the Eastern route, and to a lower extent also the Central route. A more structural element such as the socioeconomic situation in the origin countries is most important when it comes to the Western route. Yet, it remains a decisive element throughout the Mediterranean, followed by the socio-political situation. Climate change and demographic transition are still considered to have limited impact on human movements in the region.

3. Migration Corridors or routes, identify those spaces along the Mediterranean where sea crossing of migratory flows concentrate. It follows the model of the Map on Mixed Migration Routes, produced in the framework of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM). The map is a model, showing key mixed migration routes, key migration hubs and known points of irregular border crossing, including land, sea, and airport borders, as well as risk zones along these routes.

**Graph 6: Ranking key possible drivers of migratory movements for the next ten years in the euro-mediterranean region.**

(Mean 1 – least important to 5 – most important)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 2

Overall, this mid-term assessment is shared by respondents from both north and south/south east Mediterranean countries, although with some nuances when ranking possible drivers of migration. For instance, armed conflicts tend to be less decisive for EU-28 respondents than socioeconomic and socio-political situation when it comes to the western Corridor (see Graph 6).

Here again, open-ended answers offer additional and useful points of view that complete this data, and introduce some qualitative elements:

The relation between the Corridors and mentioned factors behind the movement of persons will also depend very much on controls imposed on each route.

Polish respondent

Les pays non démocratiques posent le problème de la surnatalité qui se résorbe par l'émigration. La démographie est un problème majeur : il faut une pause de la natalité dans les pays d'où viennent les migrants.

Moroccan respondent

Apart from these reasons, one should mention the deterioration of living conditions in neighbouring countries to conflict and lack of durable solutions in those countries, which would put more pressure of Central and Eastern Corridor.

Lithuanian respondent



The water conflicts in the Euphrates-Tigris rivers basin have created political and Socioeconomic havoc, mainly in the downstream territories in Syria and Iraq. Three sequential severe droughts in the Sahara and the Sub-Sahara territories have caused political tension and massive human migration.

Israeli respondent

The importance of the Eastern Corridor in the general situation of refugee is overestimated by many western government, by the media in general and even by some international organizations. The complex situation in the Middle East, although very important, is not the main driver of the migration movements toward the EU.

Italian respondent

There are clear linkages between elements: the consequences of demographic transition are seen in the socioeconomic situation and not separately.

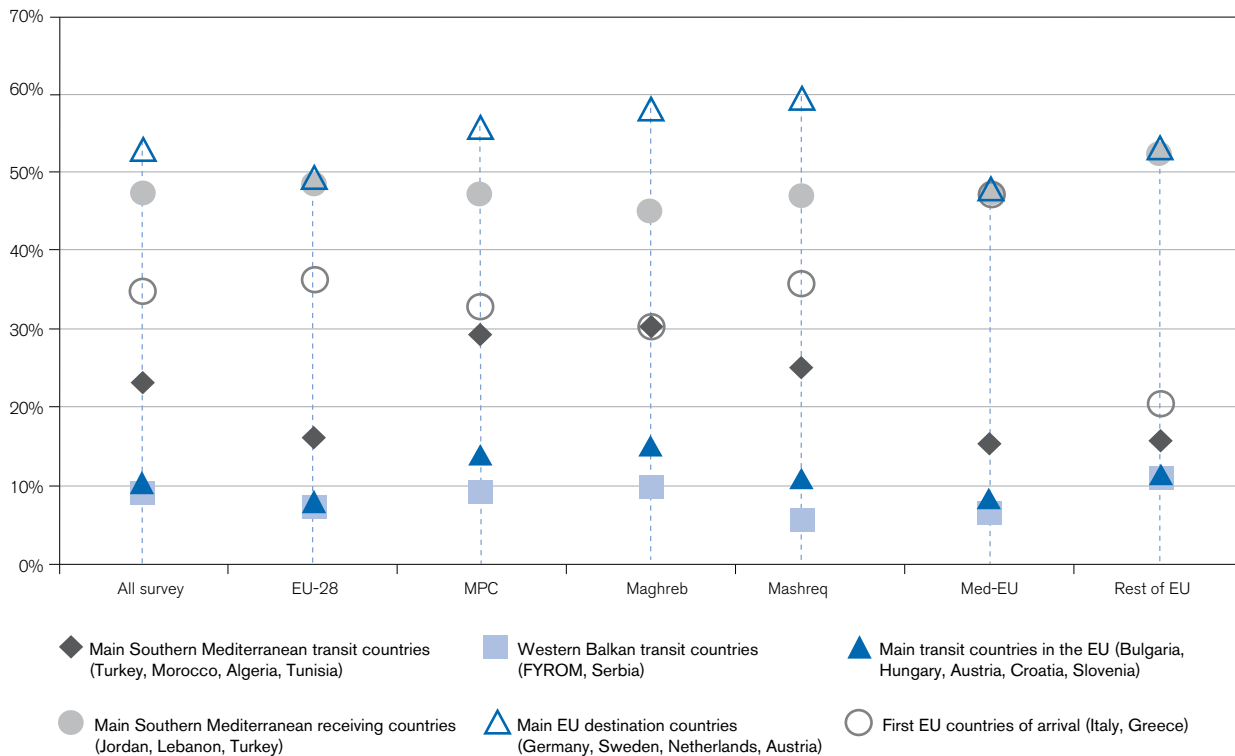
Egyptian respondent

Questions 4 and 5 were designed with the objective to assess the policy response to the current situation from a double perspective: firstly a personal and general assessment of the policy responses and second, the evaluation of what was conditioning these policy responses.

The proportion of respondents from South and South East Mediterranean countries indicating that the policy response was good in “main EU countries of destination” is higher than those from the EU. In second place and very close to 50% come the “Main Southern Mediterranean receiving countries” (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey). An interesting trend is that responses from EU countries tend to give the same evaluation to these two groups of countries, while respondents from South and South East Mediterranean countries tend to more positively assess the “Main EU countries of destination”. The Graph 7 also indicates that respondents from EU Mediterranean countries give the same assessment also to three groups of countries, the former ones plus “First EU countries of arrival (Italy, Greece)”.

First EU countries of arrival obtain a remarkable heterogeneous assessment, while in turn, transit countries in Europe receive a quite negative assessment.

**Graph 7: How would you assess the policy response to the present migration and refugee situation by:**  
 (The graph below shows the % of good and very good answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 4

The open-ended answer part of Q4 shows the complexity to elaborate a standardised answer to assess the policy response according to the proposed typology of sub-regional grouping.

Italy and Greece systems are undeniably under pressure (Italy is about to reach its welcoming capacities in the South of 150,000 places for the present year). The German policy response, as well as for France and the UK, have been completely uncertain, unstable and based on emergency purpose instead of long term strategy and short-mid term integration. Overall, lack of leadership from the EU.

Belgian respondent

Turkey has not been one of the transit countries. Those who have aimed to reach the EU countries are those who have stayed in Turkey too long and loosing hope to return back to their own countries have aimed at better living conditions in Europe.

Turkish respondent

Italy and Greece have been acting quite differently and Italy has more long term and structured facilities for migration. This does not change the fact that both responses have been affected by the lack of a concrete EU relocation plan. Countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have been hosting many people, but at a high cost for the migrants' rights and livelihoods.

Italian respondent

It is difficult to answer as the questionnaire groups together receiving countries with very different policies.

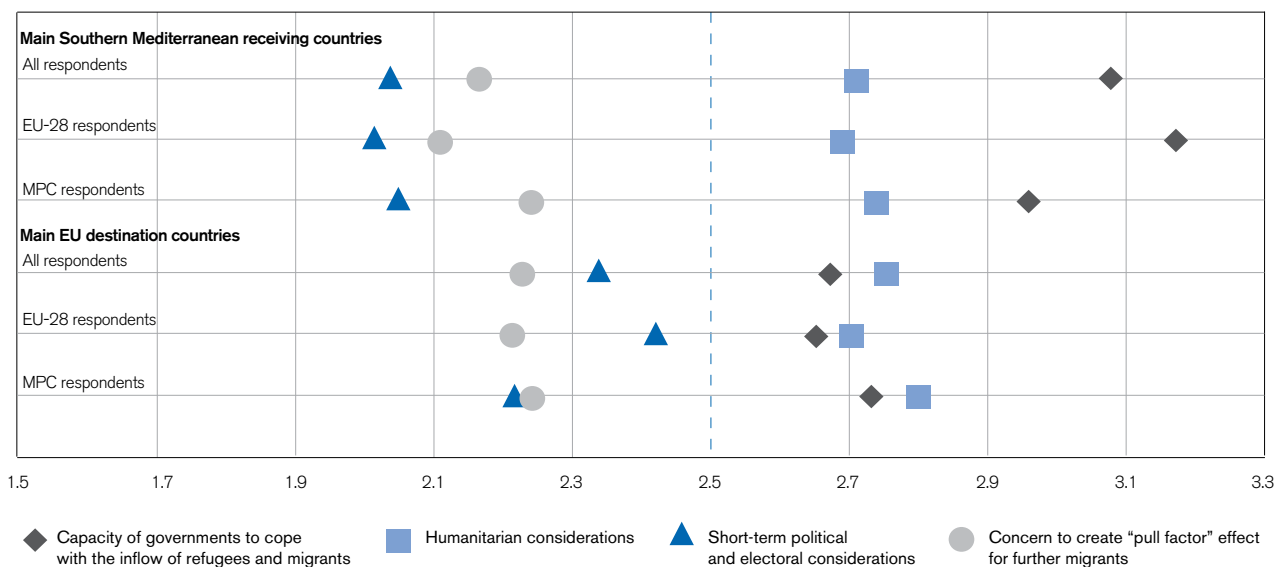
Lebanese respondent

Ces associations de pays rendent les réponses difficiles voire contre-productives. La réponse politique de l'Italie n'est pas celle de la Grèce. Celle du Maroc n'est pas du tout celle de la Tunisie ou de l'Algérie. Par ailleurs, la réponse politique des pays européens a grandement varié en un laps de temps court. La réponse de l'Allemagne est-elle comparable à celle des Pays-Bas?

French respondent

Q5 was geared towards the main drivers conditioning these policy responses. Respondents evaluated that the capacity of governments to cope with the inflow of people was the most significant element driving the policy response by “Main South Mediterranean receiving countries” (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey). This element is not as prevalent for “main EU destination countries” (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria) (see Graph 8).

**Graph 8: Ranking key possible drivers conditioning policy response in transit and receiving countries.**  
(Mean 1 – least important to 5 – most important)

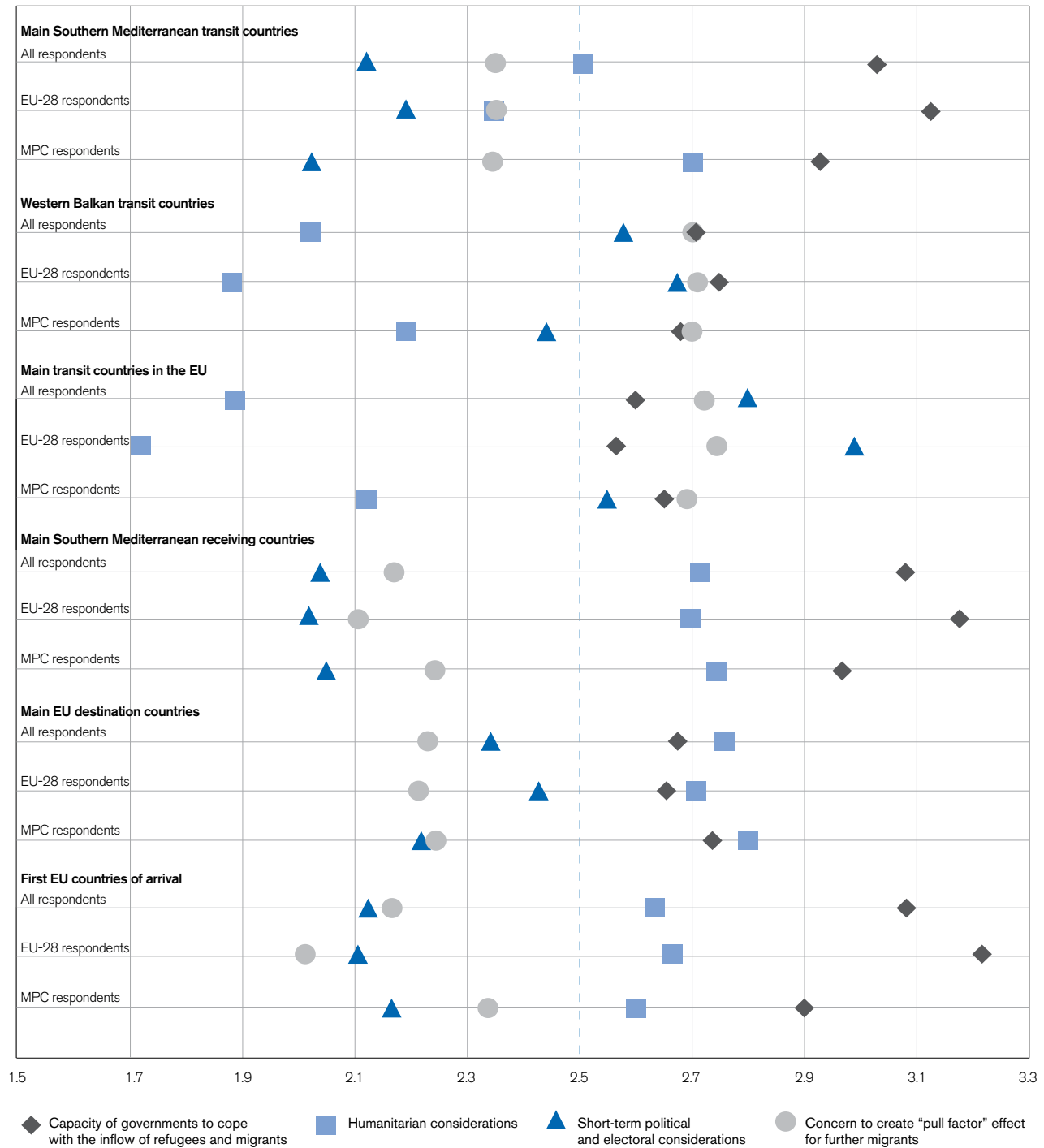


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 5

A similar trend as for southern receiving countries can be found in the case of first EU receiving countries. According to the respondents, the political response in Greece and Italy is conditioned mostly by the capacity of their governments to cope with refugees and migrants (Graph 9).

The picture is a bit different when it comes to main transit countries in the EU. Respondents assess that short-term political and electoral considerations as well the concern to create a “pull factor” effect for further migrants have been prevailing drivers shaping the policy response of those countries (see Graph 8). Echoing the results of the Q4, respondents assessed here that the policy response by the main European transit countries had been conditioned by humanitarian considerations only to a very limited extent (Q5).

**Graph 9: Ranking key possible drivers conditioning policy response in transit and receiving countries.**  
 (Mean 1 – least important to 5 – most important)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 5

Again, open-ended answers inform about the difficulties that appear when trying to obtain a picture of policy responses in such a dynamic, diverse and changing landscape.

All these country cases are very different. Italy and Greece have two very different perceptions of migrants. In Greece, most of the population is prejudiced towards migrants. Again, Austria cannot be compared to Bulgaria or Hungary. The main driving factors in Turkey, Algeria and Morocco are not the capacity of government but the type of government.

United Kingdom respondent

Les réactions des pays d'accueil et de transit ne sont pas immuables, sauf pour les pays voisins des zones de conflit; les pays d'accueil et de transit de l'Europe du Nord varient selon les considérations locales à court terme... sauf pour ceux qui ont une politique d'accueil bien claire: l'Allemagne et la Suède.

Algerian respondent

I understand the need to keep the questionnaire reasonably short, but the grouping of countries is seriously problematic since some groups involve important contrasts. Also, government policy has changed a lot in a short period of time, e.g. in Germany.

United Kingdom respondent

Question 6 asked about the consequences of this unprecedented migration and refugee situation. The focus of the question was on instability at both domestic and regional level.

Marginalisation of refugee communities is seen as the biggest potential source of instability, followed by tensions between local and refugee populations. However, it is to be noted that seen from Southern Mediterranean countries, the second element with more instability potential is the impact on the socioeconomic stability of host countries (see Graph 10).

A lack of robust policies for short- and longer-term integration of these refugee communities would create a fertile ground for extremism and tensions to arise within and intra communities.

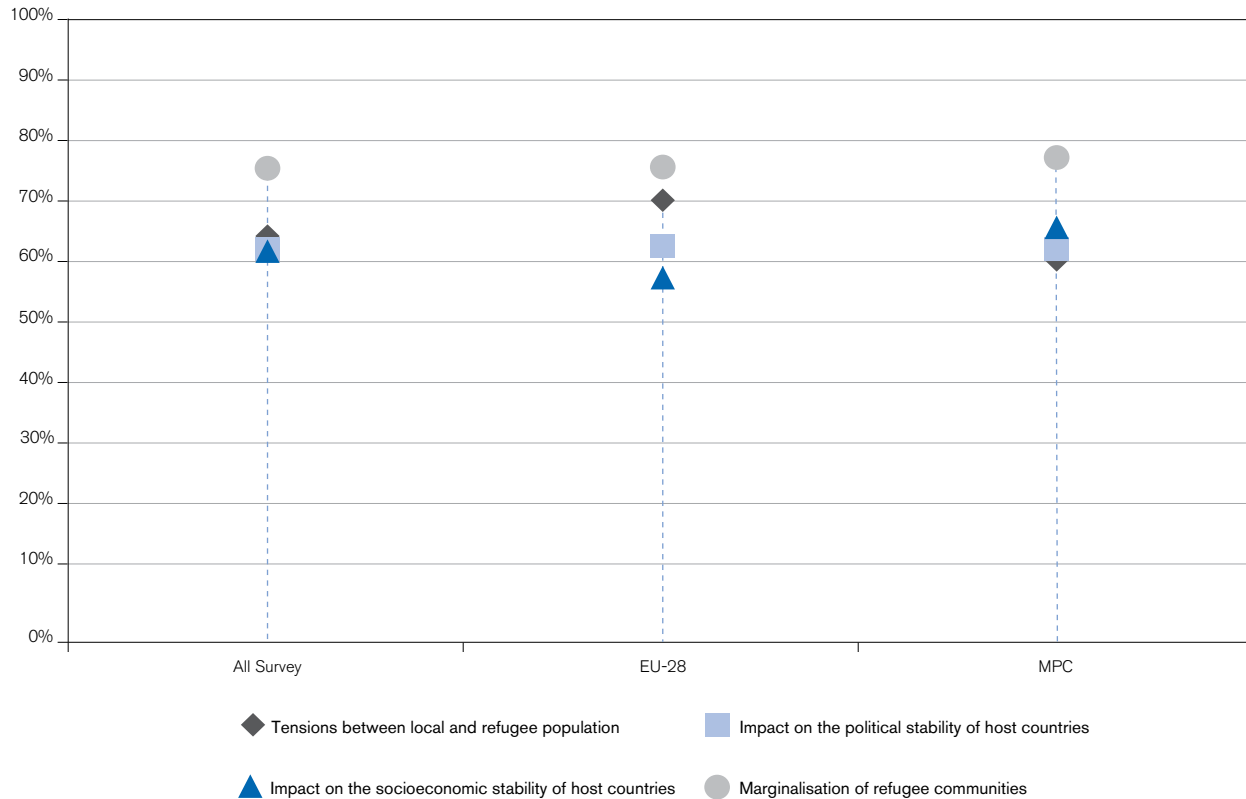
Greek respondent

Il faut distinguer les pays européens des pays voisins. Dans le cas des pays européens, le risque le plus immédiat est le développement de mouvements xénophobes et populistes et la criminalisation de l'étranger. Dans les pays limitrophes (Jordanie, Liban, Turquie) c'est l'impact socio-économique sur le marché du travail, la pression sur les ressources hydriques, sanitaires et financières.

Palestinian respondent

**Graph 10: To what extent can the following elements be seen as a potential source of domestic and regional instability?**

(The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent answers)



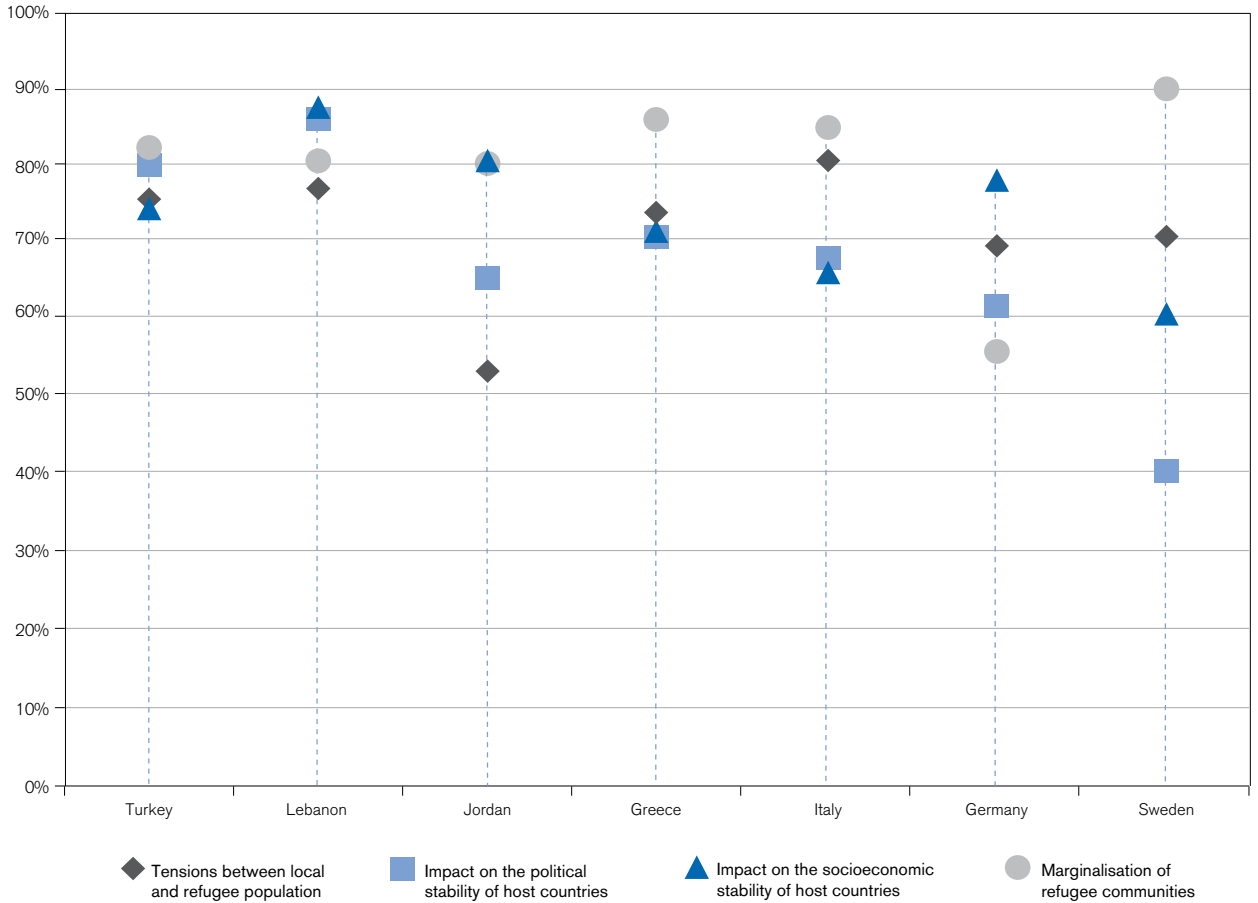
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 6

Seen from the point of view of each country, the answers reveal a quite remarkable heterogeneity. In the three Syria's neighbouring countries, "socioeconomic and political stability" is seen as a more problematic issue than "possible tensions between local and refugee population". This perception is reversed in the case of first countries of arrival such as Italy and Greece, while countries of destination in Europe show a more diverse assessment (see Graph 11)

The reply to this question depends on countries: the solidity of their political systems, the volume of their economies, the standard of living of their populations, the volume of refugees it hosts. However, regional stability is affected by lack of adaptation in the inter-regional Euro-Mediterranean system.

Egyptian respondent

**Graph 11: To what extent can the following elements be seen as a potential source of domestic and regional instability?**  
 (The graph below shows the % of high and very high extent answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 6

This first block of questions ends with a question on one important yet underestimated dimension of the international refugee system, which is how to support the efforts deployed by host societies that receive refugee flows. The aim of the question is to determine if the international refugee system, together with the improvement of the effective protection of refugees, should also enhance this other dimension of host societies particularly critical for those neighbouring areas of the conflict countries.

Results point indeed to the need to integrate help to host communities providing protection to refugees: the option “very high extent” receive the highest percentages, above 50%, and even above 60% in the cases of Mashreq countries or respondents from the civil society.

In countries such as Jordan involving host communities is extremely important because they are often not in a better position than refugee groups and have limited access to alternative sources of aid or services. To ensure that tension does not ferment between communities this must be taken into consideration.

Jordanian respondent

It undoubtedly should. In host developing countries, local populations are as deserving of protection and livelihoods as refugees. Neglecting them will only result in conflict of resources and affect the protection of refugees. But the protection system should also be more explicit and elaborate about international cooperation in sharing the burden of refugees.

Egyptian respondent

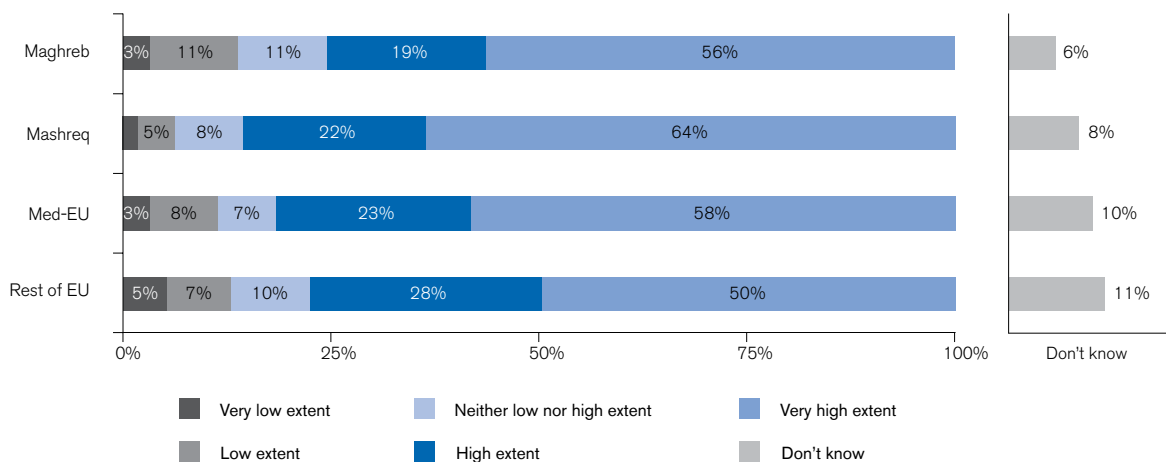
The concerns of the host populations (even if exaggerated or even unfounded) need to be addressed, through awareness-raising and the provision of reliable information on the refugee situation and the international/european/national policy responses.

Greek respondent

If it would, then the EU should take on many more migrants as the EU is supposed to have more capabilities. However, it does not seem that the EU is willing to host more migrants. Instead, it is offering aid to Third Countries in exchange of hardening border policies, which is highly concerning considering the kind of violence that refugees and migrants could experience in countries like Libya.

United Kingdom respondent

**Graph 12: To what extent should the current international refugee protection system somehow integrate the dimension of the host communities providing protection?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 7