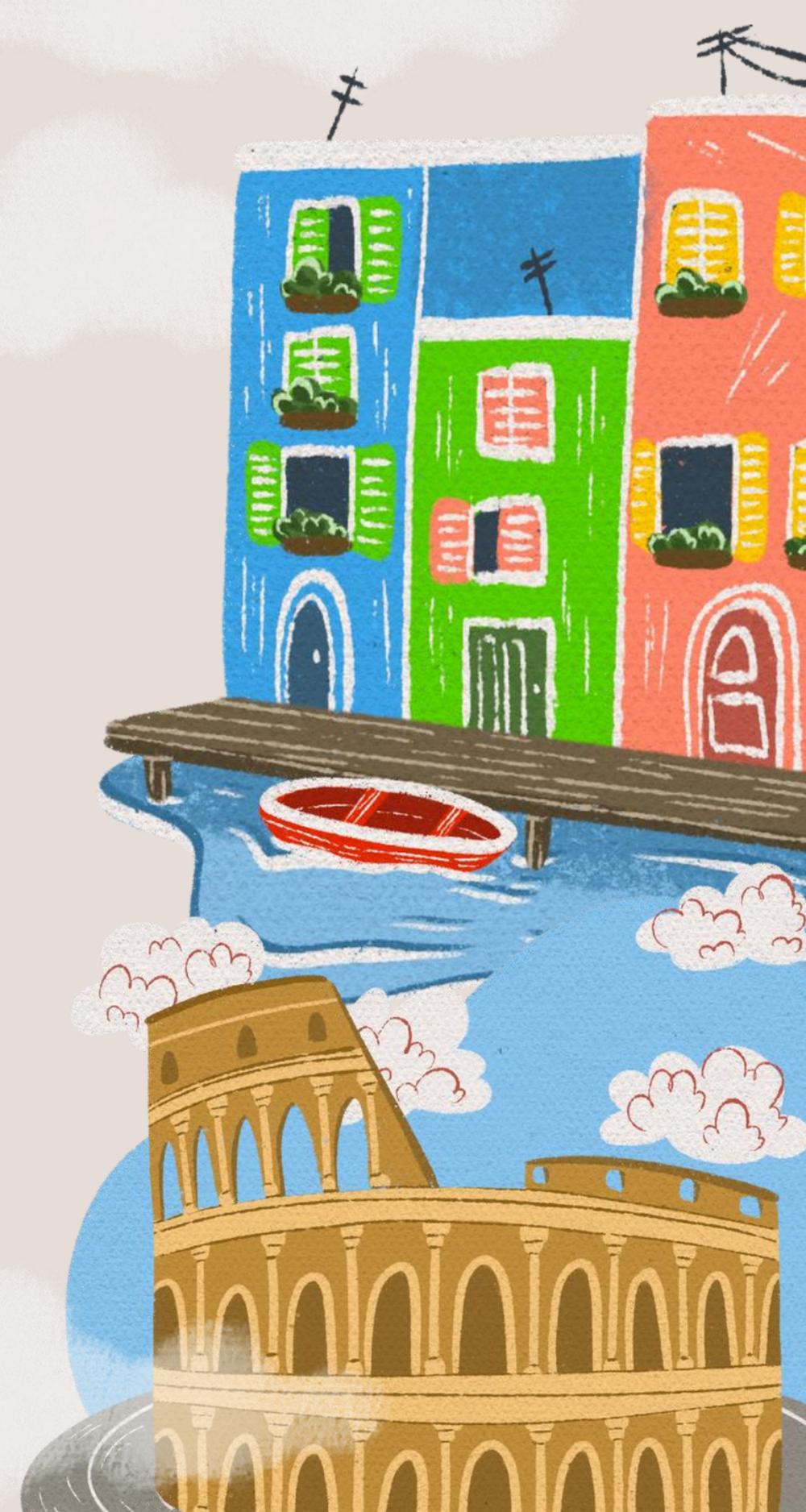




ITALY

Lucia Blöchl



GENERAL OVERVIEW

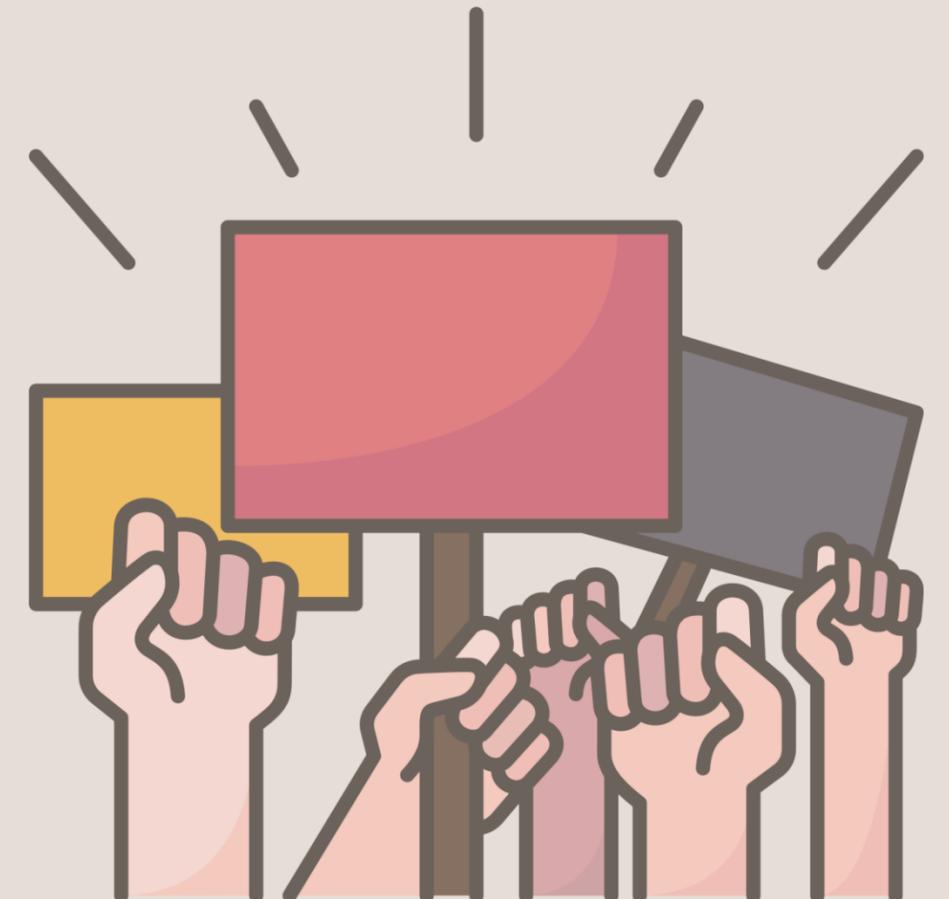


- Size:
 - 7th biggest country in EU by area
 - 3rd by population (59 mill.) → 13%
- Founding EU member (1951 ECSC, 1957 Rome Treaties)
- Member of NATO, Eurozone and Schengen
- Geography:
 - Mediterranean frontline → migration pressures
 - North much richer than South



HISTORY

- 1861: Late reunification
- 1922-1945: Fascist dictatorship under Mussolini
- 1943-1945: Civil war between Italian fascists and Italian partisans
- Loser of war together with Germany -> oversea colonies, territories
- 1946: Referendum to abolish monarchy
- 1948: First Republic



FIRST REPUBLIC 1948-1992



- Unstable government → inconsistent EU messages but mostly pro-European foreign policy
- Mediator role in EU
- Dominated by Christian Democratic Party
- 1969-1980s: “Years of Lead”, extremist left- and right-wing political terrorism
- Early 1990s: Mani pulite = investigation and exposure of immense political corruption (Tangentopoli) → disbandment of biggest parties

1992-1996

- Treaty of Maastricht forced political changes to fulfill requirements
- 1992-1996: technicians' governments apart from 1994
- Media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi entered politics and won the 1994 Italian general election with Forza Italia
- Would go on to serve two more terms → longest serving post-war prime minister of Italy
- Push for more dominant role of Italy in EU



Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of Italy 1994-1995, 2001-2006 and 2008-2011

SECOND REPUBLIC

1996- NOW



- Referendum 1991/93: moving from a proportional to a majoritarian electoral system → more dynamic yet stable system
- Alternation in opposed political coalitions almost every election (center-left to center-right) → permanent tension because of their composition → still frequent government switches
- Division in and between coalitions lead to contrasting input for Italian policy preferences
- 2006: new PR-oriented system again: bonus of seats for winning coalition
- Shift especially in right parties → 2001 first time openly Eurosceptic

POLITICS

- Government system:
 - Parliamentary Republic with frequent coalition governments
 - Unitary but considered as a regionalized state
- President = head of state (largely ceremonial but influential in crises)
- Prime Minister = head of government



PARTY SYSTEM

Party Family	Radical Left	Social Democrats	Greens	Liberals & centrists	Christian Democrats & Conservatives	Eurosceptic Conservatives	Radical Right Nationalists
EP Group	The Left in the EP	Socialists & Democrats	The Greens - EFA	Renew Europe	European People's Party	European Conservatives & Reformists	Patriots for Europe
Acronym	GUE-NGL	S&D	Greens	Renew	EPP	ECR	PfE (Patriots)
National Party Name	Movimento 5 Stelle	Partito Democratico	Europa Verde	Italia Viva, Azione	Forza Italia	Fratelli d'Italia	Lega
Party Acronym	M5S	PD	EGP	IV, A	FI	FdI	LSP

EUROSCEPTISM

- Parties:
 - Fratelli d'Italia (Meloni → pragmatic Nationalism)
 - Lega (government 2018) → openly Eurosceptic
- Pattern: critical in opposition, moderation in government
- Public opinion: 56–60% pro-EU, criticism mainly economic
- Impact: Euroscepticism challenges but does not undermine Italy's EU engagement

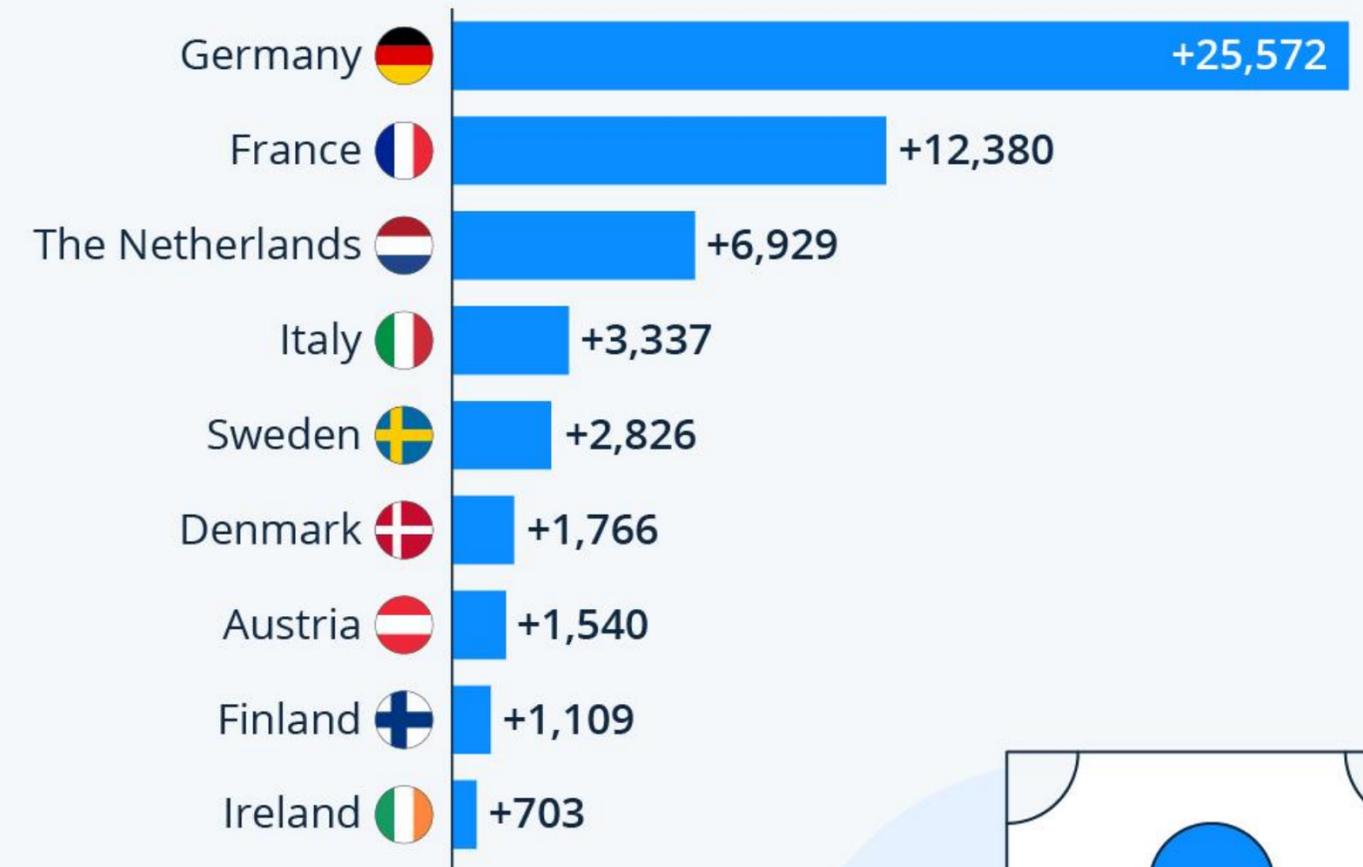


ECONOMY

- Major Eurozone economy (12% of GDP) but high public debt (2nd highest, 135.3%) and budget deficit (-3.4%)
- Slow growth
- Economic crisis: grouped together with other southern countries

Which Countries Are EU Contributors and Beneficiaries?

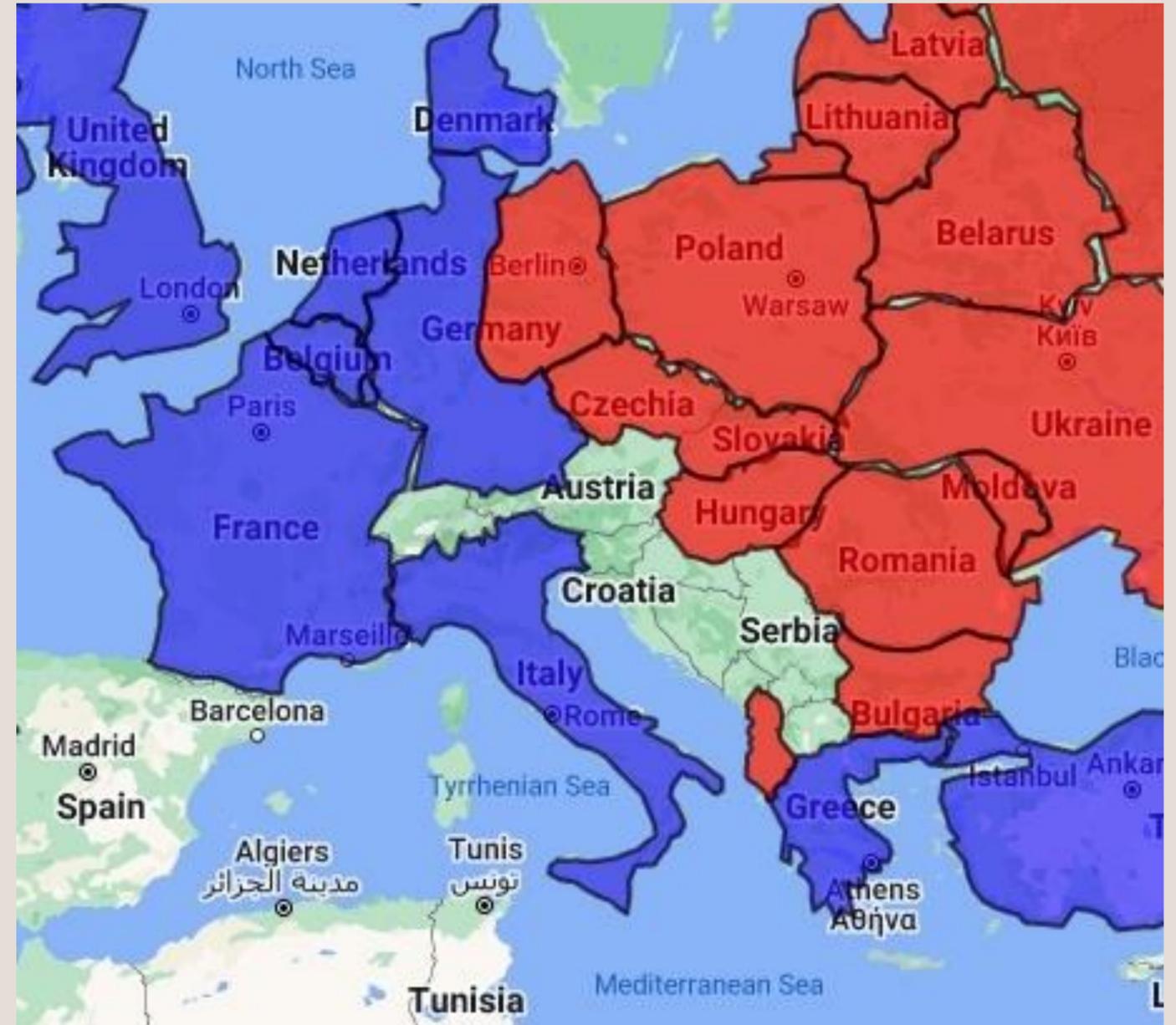
Net contributions to the EU budget, by member state (2021, in million euros)*



**WHY AND WHAT
EUROPE?**

MOTIVES FOR INTEGRATION

- Post-war stability
- Modernization & economic advantages
- Western alliance → anti-communism



CENTRAL CONCERNS

- Pragmatic, intergovernmental approach (especially under Meloni)

Policy Field	Italy's Position
Economy	Flexible budget rules
Defense	Supports cooperation but limits deployment
Migration	EU-wide burden-sharing
Enlargement	Supportive (Balkans, Ukraine)

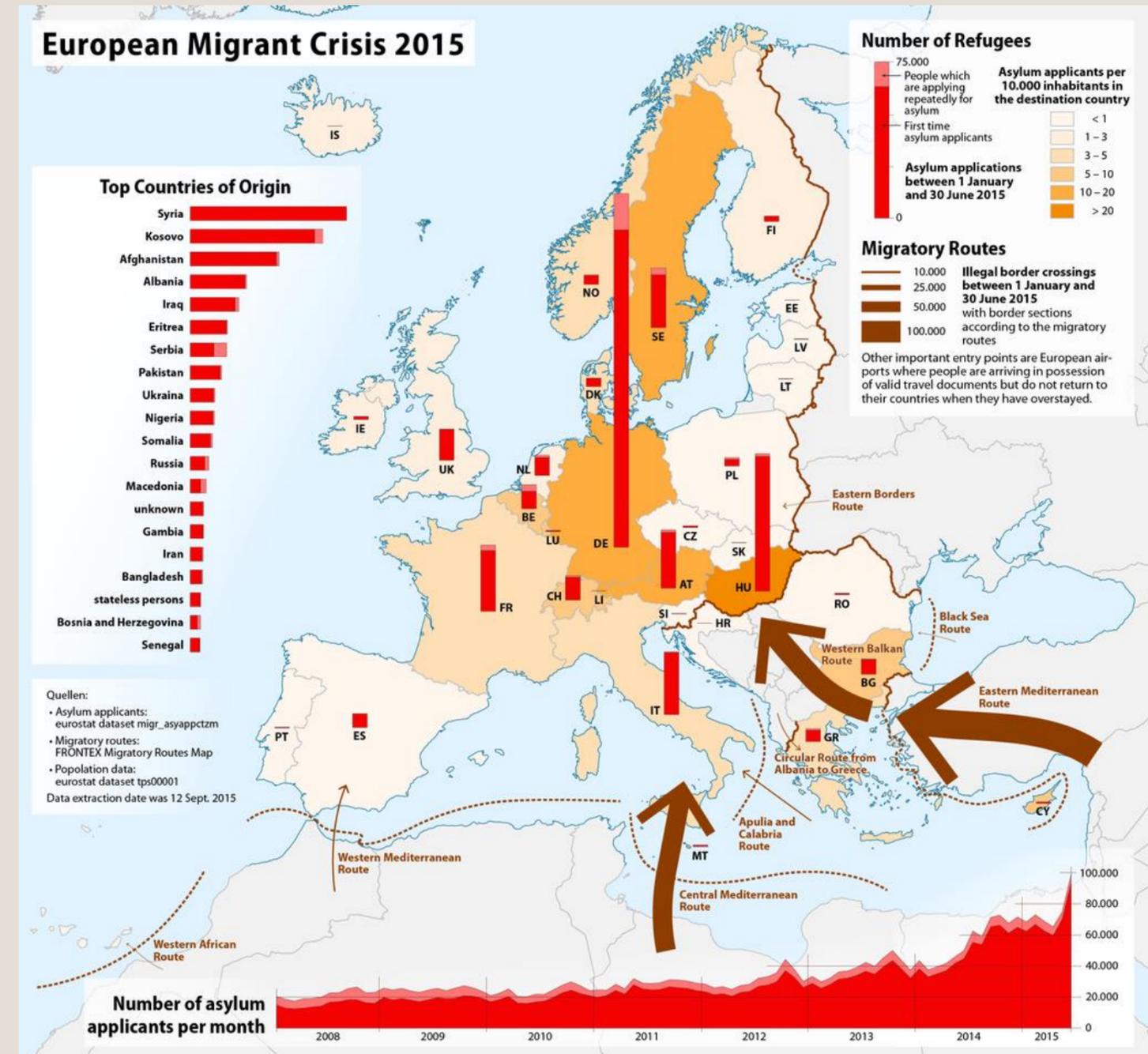


RECENT AND CURRENT CHALLENGES



MIGRATION CRISIS

- High arrivals via Mediterranean routes (high point in 2016 with 180.000)
- Calls for EU-wide burden-sharing
- Bilateral deals (e.g., 2023 Tunisia)
- Temporary border controls during migration or security crises





UKRAINE WAR



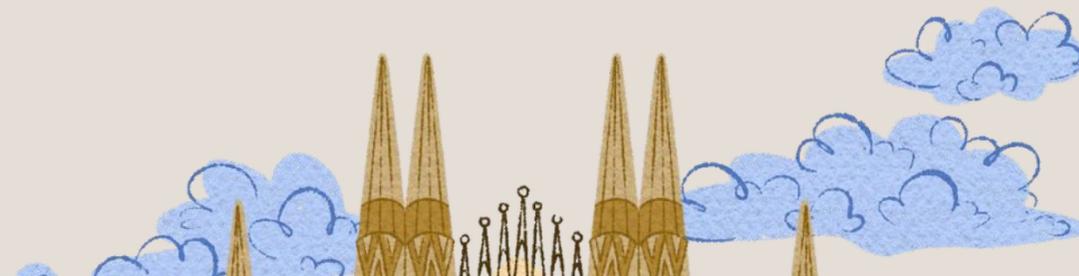
- Supports EU sanctions and Ukraine aid
- Military support (11 packages, 2.5-3 bill €)
- Focus on energy diversification and domestic cost management
- Supports Ukraine EU membership
- Meloni: pro-Ukraine, pragmatic diplomacy
- Public opinion divided over military support
- Discussions of activating the national escape clause for defense expenditure

CONCLUSION

1 Despite being a founding-member very little influence on the policy making due to several institutional and systemic reasons

2 Still not a dominant EU agenda-setter but trying to reposition itself and assert influence especially in migration & defence debates

3 Italy remains a committed but pragmatic EU member having to balance economic dependence on the EU (debt relief, recovery funds) with a desire for national sovereignty in fiscal and migration policies





**THANK
YOU!**

