

MASTER THESIS

Coordinating European Hotspots

A network governance analysis of the European crisis response

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List of Abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ARGUS	General Rapid Alert System
COM	European Commission
Council	Council of the European Union
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EEAS	European External Action Service
EBCGA	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EURTF	EU Regional Task Force
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCR	Integrated Political Crisis Response
ISAA Report	Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis Report
ISF	Internal Security Fund
GSC	General Secretariat of the Council
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MS	Member State
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
RIC	Reception and Identification Centre
SRSS	Structural Reform Support Service

1. Introduction

“The migration crisis is not really a crisis but a long-lasting challenge”
Emmanuel Macron, 29 September 2017, Sorbonne

President Macron’s words sum up the importance of processing what has occurred in Europe over the past years, and most notably in 2015 and 2016 when more than a million asylum seekers crossed the European borders. After arrivals of migrants and refugees to European Union Member States had slowly increased in 2014, the summer of 2015 has marked the beginning of the so-called migration crisis with more than 10 000 persons entering the EU every single day (Frontex, 2018a).

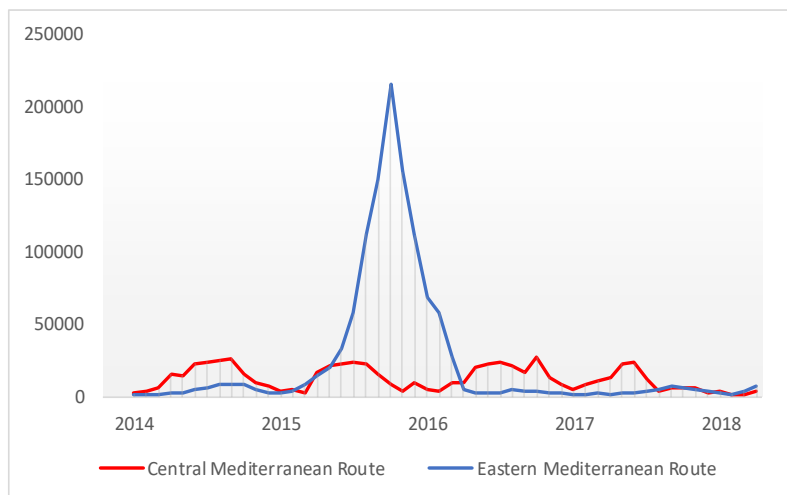


Figure 1: Irregular arrivals to Greek (blue) and Italy (red) from 2014 to 2018
Source: own compilation, Frontex 2018

From the main frontline Member States, namely Italy and Greece, migrants¹ would move on to popular destination countries like Germany and Sweden crossing through several EU and non-EU countries on their way. This posed a collective action problem to the EU by threatening the free

movement area of Schengen and impacting the countries they would transit and reside in.

For the year 2015, UNHCR counts 65.3 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide (UNHCR, 2016, p. 2), compared to which the share of the EU is a relatively small number. However, the concentration of persons arriving in the summer and autumn months of 2015, constituted an enormous challenge to the frontline Member States who had to channel and accommodate the incoming migrants. Also, media attention was considerable, on the one hand building it up to a menace facing the EU, while on the other reporting about deaths in the Mediterranean

¹ The word migrant is used as a broad term referring to the mixed migration movements crossing the borders, which comprise both economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In 2015, the share of Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis arriving to Europe alone was 77.5%, International Organization for Migration, 2016.

and Aegean Sea and hardships faced on the journey of migrants. In this sensitive political situation, the EU had to find a solution to better regulate migration flows.

In its Communication on the European Agenda on Migration from May 2015, the European Commission sets out actions to respond to increasing numbers of crossings and deaths in the Mediterranean Sea. Meant also as a blueprint for future crises, the measures include for example saving lives at sea, targeting criminal smuggling networks, reforming the asylum system, the relocation of persons in need for international protection and partnerships with third countries (European Commission, 2015a, pp. 3–5). Part of this is the ‘hotspot’ approach which entails the installation of several centralized reception centres for asylum seekers, hotspots, in key locations in Italy and Greece. The approach is supposed to help identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants after which they are channelled to the asylum procedure, to be relocated or returned (European Commission, 2016a). To support national authorities, European agencies are deployed in the hotspots. The European Asylum Support Office’s (EASO) main task is to support processing asylum cases, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, helps the Member States with coordinating the return of irregular migrants and Europol and Eurojust contribute to investigations in smuggling and trafficking networks (European Commission, 2015a). In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations are on the ground as well as different departments of the Commission involved in the coordination. Political decisions and steering have taken place both in the Council and the Commission and the capitals of Italy and Greece. Thus, the hotspots span a network of actors over multiple levels.

While the hotspot approach has been very successful in improving border management by registering and security checking incoming migrants, there have been critics on the slow set-up, shortage of capacities and the overall management (European Court of Auditors, 2017). Since the implementation of the approach was very ad hoc and took place under extreme circumstances, practices have developed along the way, improved and lessons have been learned. Taking a closer look at the coordination of this response can therefore yield crucial insights into factors contributing to effective coordination and teach the EU how to be better prepared for a swift crisis response.

Since 1997, the global population of forcibly displaced people has grown from 33.9 million (UNHCR, 2017) to 68.5 million in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). Despite many efforts to enhance border protection and prevent people from crossing the sea, crises in the Middle East and Africa,

economic hardship and climate change mean migration is here to stay. With the current inability to reform an outdated Dublin system, and current ideas to set up centres outside of Europe to process migrants, hotspots will remain an important tool inside Europe and could also become a model for projects in third countries. Hence, now is the time to reflect on this particular approach and learn from its lessons. Decision makers need to know about problems that occurred, which solutions have worked and what best practices have developed in the coordination of the response in order to better be prepared for future crises. Moreover, learning from coordinating multiple actors at different levels, can also benefit other scenarios of coordination in an ever more complicated and internationally connected world. Therefore, this thesis poses the following research question:

How have actors responded to challenges posed by the migration crisis and which factors of the EU's crisis response in the hotspot approach have led to more effective coordination?

1.1 Theoretical interest

The analytical framework used to respond to this question is network governance, which refers to a linkage of interdependent actors from different institutional levels (Coen & Thatcher, 2008, p. 50). It is useful to describe the increasing fragmentation and growth of problems defining contemporary governance and policy making (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012), thus offering insights into the complex network present in the hotspot approach. With its many actors and multiple levels, the approach offers a typical case of coordination of a network. The idiosyncrasy of the crisis situation leading to an ad hoc implementation of the approach without the chance to plan it at length, can have further interesting implications for the theory. Therefore, in my thesis will address several questions:

How can network governance help to explain the effectiveness of the EU's crisis response?

How has coordination developed on the political level as well as on the ground?

How was the response steered?

Which factors have already worked well and what can still be improved?

These questioned are studied in a comparative analysis between the hotspot approach in Greece and Italy. Besides independent reports and European institutional documents, in-depth expert interviews have been conducted to learn about the cooperation and coordination in and of the hotspots.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The following chapter provides some background on the context of the hotspot approach, which was just one part of the crisis response. It is important to understand the unfolding of events since many of the actions are interlinked and events such as the EU-Turkey statement have important consequences for the hotspots. The next part deals with the theoretical approach and lays out the basics of network governance, a broader literature review of the widely applied theory and will then focus on aspects of coordination and effectiveness. Afterwards, the fourth chapter outlines the methodological approach in which the use of expert interviews and other data sources are explained. The analysis will be conducted in a comparative manner analyzing Italy and Greece. First, it is defined how effective the hotspot approach was to be able to determine factors contributing to effective coordination. Second, the structure of the network is examined to inform about implications for the level of leadership which should be applied for optimal coordination. Thirdly, several factors for effective coordination are analysed to see to which extent they were present in the hotspot approach. Additionally, the data analysis is conducted in an open manner to identify further elements which contributed to more successful coordination. The final chapter concludes this thesis by summing up the main findings.

2. Putting the hotspots into context

2.1 Emergence of the migration crisis

The migration crisis took the EU by surprise even though there had been signs that larger refugee flows would be building up. With the war in Syria manifesting itself, the Taliban leaving Afghanistan in an ever-unstable condition and ISIS spreading its terror regime throughout Iraq, reasons to flee the Middle Eastern region were many and the numbers of asylum applications were on the rise already in 2014 when they almost tripled compared to the year before (Frontex, 2018a). By 2015, about four million people already had found shelter in rather tough conditions in neighbouring states like Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan while legal entrance to most Arab countries was extremely difficult so that refugees increasingly turned towards Europe (Kingsley, 2015). A wake-up call to the growing migration movements and their related danger was represented by two incidents in April 2015, when first 400 and a few days later 800 people drowned off the Italian coast.

Finally, the sudden and extreme increase of inflows in the summer months marked the beginning of the refugee crisis. Overall in 2015, the numbers of arrivals of migrants had again increased by 354% (4.5 times as high) compared to 2014 (Frontex, 2018a). In spring 2016, the flows into Europe normalized again which is mainly due to the EU-Turkey statement which stipulated that migrants arriving to the Greek islands would be returned to Turkey. Nevertheless, the number of asylum applications remained high with over 1.2 million first-time asylum applicants in the EU both in 2015 and 2016 (Eurostat, 2018 ; see table 1).

Table 1: Irregular arrivals on the Mediterranean Routes and first-time asylum applicants in EU-28
Source: Frontex, 2018a; Eurostat, 2018

Year	Arrivals	Asylum applications
2013	79 000	368 000
2014	231 000	563 000
2015	1 048 000	1 257 000
2016	376 000	1 206 000

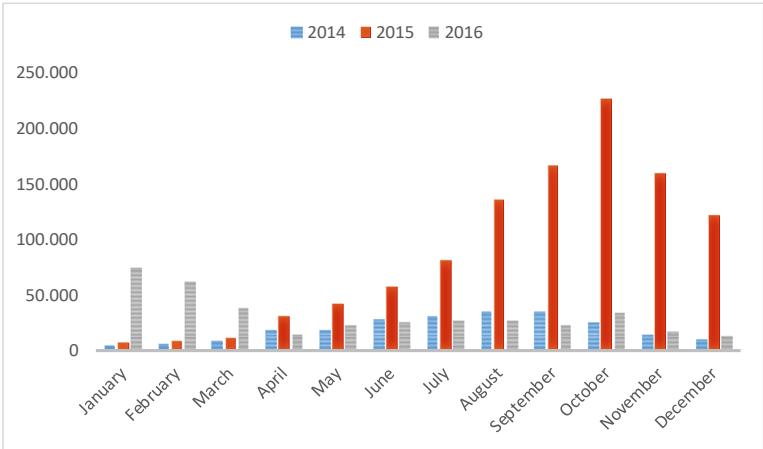


Figure 1: Irregular arrivals on the Mediterranean Routes 2014-2016
Source: own compilation, Frontex 2018a

A crisis is considered a situation that has reached an “extremely difficult or dangerous point” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). According to Falkner (2016, p. 219), a political crisis is a situation in which, on the one hand, politicians are confronted with significant need for action, and on the other, limited time to accomplish reforms, which is the case in the migration or refugee crisis. However, some authors also warn to be careful with this term since it could trigger securitization² (Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, p. 314). Images of overfilled boats gave a misleading impression of a spin out of control requiring radical action whereas migration was a normal phenomenon having also positive effects on the economy. Also, the numbers were neither unprecedented nor very high compared to countries such as Turkey, Pakistan or Jordan (Haas, 2017).

While some of the reservations seem certainly justified, it must also be considered that the asylum systems of EU Member States are not constructed to cope with extreme fluctuations in flow. Thus, the inability to manage the flows in autumn of 2015 posed indeed an extremely difficult challenge (cf. Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 4) and led to emergency situations for many migrants. In fact, the migration crisis can be defined as a transboundary crisis whose origins and implications cut “through multiple types of borders: geographic, policy, political, cultural, language, legal”, and which is typically intertwined with increasingly complex infrastructures and uncontrolled forces linked to globalization (European Societal Security Research Group).

2.2 EU’s response to the migration crisis

A crisis can be a momentum for further integration as it has been the case with crises before like the economic crisis (Ioannou, Leblond, & Niemann, 2015). Because of the urgency and threat, political actors have more leeway to free resources and take necessary decisions. Therefore, inventive new ways of collaboration can develop also between disparate actors to find much needed solutions (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 5). With each crisis the EU has faced, Member States invested additional authority in the EU’s crisis management (Boin, Busuioc, & Groenleer, 2014, p. 419). This occurred in a rather punctuated and piecemeal manner since the design of international crisis management has to overcome deep tensions between prevention and resilience, government and governance and Member States interests as well as crisis

² Securitization refers to an extreme version of politicization which enables extraordinary measures to be used in the name of security, Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998.

management requirements (Boin et al., 2014; Hutter, 2010). This is also true for crisis management in 2015 and 2016, which was very ad hoc and rather fragmented.

The response to the refugee crisis materialised on multiple levels: Member States played a role in negotiating solutions with third countries and providing resources, the Council of the EU (Council) posed a platform for coordination and deciding new legislation and the European Commission (Commission) proposed, supported as well as coordinated parts of the measures. The following subsections will outline the most important actions taken by the EU.

2.2.1 First measures – saving lives at sea

To trace the response to the crisis, we have to go back prior to 2015, when one of the priorities was to prevent fatalities in the Mediterranean Sea. These had been increasing since the Arab spring initiated more persons to take the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. The first set of measures, the Task Force Mediterranean, was already established in October 2013 after the Lampedusa tragedy³ and led by the European Commission together with the Italian government (European Commission, 2013). Italy also launched the Operation Mare Nostrum, financially supported by the EU, which was followed by Frontex' Joint Operation Triton one year later concentrating on supporting Italy in border control and rescue actions (European Commission, 2014). The operations still in place today include Operation Themis, Sophia and Poseidon, which rescued over 375 000 lives since 2015 compared to about 8 100 deaths in the Mediterranean in the same time (Council of the European Union, 2018b; International Organization for Migration, 2018). Besides rescuing boats in distress, the missions have been aimed at improving border control, surveillance and combatting trafficking, smuggling and organised crime.

2.2.2 Collapse of the Dublin system

As the arrivals to Italy and Greece increased in spring and summer 2015, the countries found themselves overwhelmed and waved asylum seekers through towards Northern Europe, resulting in enormous secondary movements (Niemann & Zaun, 2018, p. 4). According to the

³ In October 2013, a ship of people traffickers carrying migrants and refugees sank off Lampedusa with the loss of more than 360 lives, BBC, 2013.

Dublin system, the first country of entry in the Schengen area is responsible for the respective asylum-seeker. Thus, the increased inflow of migrants did not only reveal shortcomings of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), but led to a collapse of the Dublin system 'under its own weight' (Menendez, 2016, p. 397; Niemann & Zaun, 2018, p. 4).

To tackle these problems, the EU referred to the European Agenda on Migration from May 2015 and started implementing the hotspot approach over the summer. After a slow set-up phase, the hotspots helped to increase the fingerprinting rate of migrants from 6-8% up to 100% in the first months of 2016 (Neville, Sy, & Rigon, 2016). In September 2015, the Ministers of Home Affairs approved two Council Decisions for the first time under qualified majority voting, which installed an emergency relocation system aiming to relocate 160 000 refugees from the frontline Member States (Council of the European Union, 2015b; Council of the European Union, 2015c). This divisive programme started off very slowly and after two years, only 29 000 persons had been relocated. Hence, the Commission moved away from the set goal⁴, reasoning that the figure was decided based on numbers from two years ago and prioritized voluntary resettlement instead (Gotev, 2017).

In order to find more long-term solutions, the Commission proposed two packages to reform the Common European Asylum System in May and July 2016, which are negotiated up until today (Council of the European Union, 2018a). Especially discussions on a reformed Dublin system have proved to be highly contested. Other legislative initiatives like the new and stronger mandate for Frontex, which was adopted in October 2016, were more successful (Council of the European Union & European Parliament, 2016).

2.2.3 Closing of the Balkan route

The unanticipated shifts in flow hit the EU in the summer and holiday months which delayed a quick response. In July 2015, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) was one of the first to respond to the humanitarian situation emerging in the Western Balkans, which were facing the transit of thousands of migrants, with emergency grants (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 13). With growing evidence of inhumane conditions in Hungary, one of the main recipient countries, the German government

⁴ In the latest Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration, the Commission reports that relocations from Greece have been concluded and relocation has been a success, with overall 96% of eligible applicants having been relocated, European Commission, 2018.

opened the border by suspending the Dublin Regulation for Syrians in August 2015. However, none of the other Member States followed their example. Pressured by a huge wave of arrivals, the government reversed its course by temporarily reinstating border controls. This triggered a chain reaction, prompting states like Austria, Denmark and Sweden to do the same (Niemann & Zaun, 2018, p. 4). When Hungary took the drastic measure of installing a fence in October, it finally led to a complete closure of the 'Balkan route' and contained migrants to Greece, where this exacerbated the devastating living conditions (Niemann & Zaun, 2018, p. 4; Weber, 2016).

2.2.4 Institutional coordination

Meanwhile, institutional cooperation began to emerge. The lack of a common policy line induced a succession of inconclusive extraordinary conferences and summits. Some ad hoc European Council summits were organized as well as extraordinary meetings from ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior to seek political guidance (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros, & Guild, 2015, p. 3). An important and helpful factor was that migration policies have been at the top of the political agendas of the EU heads President Juncker, High Representative Mogherini and President Tusk who all had only recently taken office (Carrera et al., 2015, pp. 1–2).

By mid-autumn 2015, the Commission convened a Leader's Meeting on the Western Balkans Migration Route following informal coordination by Austria, Slovenia and Western Balkan neighbours. Following this meeting, the Western Balkans Contact group was born, meeting weekly for coordination and thus facilitating information sharing and communication. It was chaired by President Juncker's cabinet which added strong political legitimacy to the discussions (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, pp. 15–17). Furthermore, at the end of October, the Commission triggered its general rapid alert system, ARGUS, formalising weekly coordination meetings between different Commission departments involved in the crisis under the chairmanship of the Secretariat General. The meetings provided a venue for problem-solving and high-level oversight (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, pp. 17–18; European Commission, 2005). Almost at the same time, the Luxembourg Presidency in the Council activated the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR), a crisis management mechanism from 2013 to be installed now on the highest alert level. It was a means for better information sharing between the Council, the Commission, Member States and agencies as well as a tool to find political solutions in the Council (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 18; Council of the European Union, 2016a). By establishing a

regular Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) report, compiled by different reporting teams of the Commission and including intelligence from agencies, IPCR significantly improved access to information for the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), Member States and the Council. Further, IPCR involves roundtables as a tool for the Council Presidency for more in-depth understanding and discussing solutions (cf. Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 18).

2.2.5 The EU-Turkey Statement and external measures

The improved coordination helped to form external measures of the Union of which the EU-Turkey Statement is at the heart of this strategy (Slominski & Trauner, 2018). Diplomacy from various actors in the Commission, the EEAS and key Member States like Germany and the Netherlands, helped to adopt the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan in November 2015 and finally the conclusion of the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016 (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 19). In return for, inter alia, visa liberalization and six billion Euros of funding in total, Turkey agreed to take back irregular migrants entering Greece through Turkey who have not applied for asylum or whose applications have been declared unfounded or inadmissible. Also a 1:1 resettlement scheme was agreed under which for each Syrian returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, one Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU (Council of the European Union, 2016b). After the closing of the Balkan route had reduced movements already, the Statement was swiftly implemented and resulted in a significant decrease of arrivals to Greece. However, this merely shifted the characteristics of the crisis with Greece facing a ‘new type of reception crisis’ since migrants were now confined on the islands (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 18). To implement the deal in Greece, the Commission appointed the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS). The SRSS was not initially meant to deal with migration, but parts of the team had been deployed in Greece before to support administrative reforms and thus, the SRSS became an important actor in coordinating the implementation together with the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 20). Because of the Greek asylum system, it turned out to be difficult to swiftly return asylum seekers to Turkey. Additionally, Greek authorities had to shift from processing arrivals and onward movement to handle tens of thousands asylum claims. Therefore, the EU-Turkey Agreement significantly

impacted the hotspots in Greece, where EASO had to step in to provide additional support (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 21).

Other external measures included the Valletta Summit in November 2015, in which measures to tackle the migration crisis were discussed with African leaders to strengthen cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2015a). Here, they also established the Emergency Trust fund for Africa, aiming at addressing root causes. Beyond that, other trust funds included the EU Regional Trust Fund for Syria, established in December 2014, and the Bêkou Trust Fund for the Central African Republic, established in July 2014 to provide refugee help and post-conflict support (cf. Niemann & Zaun, 2018, pp. 11–12). Additional financing was also made available to Greece and Italy under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Internal Security Fund (ISF) emergency assistance and the Emergency support instrument (ESI) for Greece (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 21).

After the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement, governments apart from Greece returned to business as usual and the Commission began working on longer-term policy responses and reverted to its 'default mode of operation' writing progress reports, producing new funding tools and a new strategy for migration partnerships (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 20). Today, many of the measures that have been initiated during the crisis are still in place, necessitating a review of the implementation and reflection on how to proceed.

2.3 The hotspot approach

The previous sections outlined the circumstances under which the hotspots had been implemented. Most of the described measures taken have at least had an indirect effect on the hotspot approach which was always impacted by the level of flows, the European political situation in general and support by other Member States. Most notably, the relocation system was meant to relieve the pressure of arrivals for the strained reception centres in Italy and Greece. Institutional arrangements helped to remind other Member States to strengthen their commitments and support to the frontline states, e.g. stepping up relocation or providing the countries with experts for EASO or Frontex. One objective of the cooperation with third countries was to stem the flows into the EU, which would have a direct impact on the management of the hotspots. Foremost, this was achieved with the EU-Turkey statement,

which on the one hand led to a decrease of arrivals and on the other restricted asylum seekers to the hotspot areas on the Greek islands. This in turn posed a challenge to Greece to improve and expand its reception conditions, but also initiated the government to improve its asylum system.

2.3.1 Set up of the hotspots

A hotspot is defined as an area at the Union’s external border facing disproportionate migratory pressure. Because most migrants enter the EU at these hotspots, the EU’s strategy was to provide operational support ensuring that arrivals are registered and channelled into the relevant follow-up procedures (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 15). For this purpose, five hotspots were opened in Greece between October 2015 and June 2016, and four in Italy between October and December 2015 with support of the Commission. Both countries presented a roadmap at the end of the summer for the set-up (Papadopoulou, 2016). The Directorate-General (DG) for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the Commission and EU agencies cooperated closely with the Member States on the implementation and funding was provided where needed. In Italy, the set-up entailed upgrading infrastructure which was already in place, while in Greece, hotspots were built up from scratch (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, pp. 11–12). At the end of 2015, EU Regional Task Forces (EURTFs) were launched in Catania and Piraeus as a coordination mechanism mainly between EU agencies and the host Member State



authorities. They would also liaise with other international organizations like UNHCR and NGOs in the respective hotspots of the Member state (Neville et al., 2016, p. 27). Figure 2 visualizes the set-up of the centres and depicts their respective capacities.

Figure 2: Set-up of hotspots in Italy and Greece
 Source: own compilation, European Commission, 2016b

2.3.2 Procedures in the hotspots

The hotspots are meant to provide an operational framework for the agencies and the Commission to support the authorities of the host Member State where it is most needed, while working under full control of the respective state. The procedures are as follows:

Upon disembarkation, incoming migrants receive a medical screening by the Member State authorities. Afterwards, the Member State's police fingerprints and registers migrants with assistance by Frontex with the EURODAC registration and screening. EASO provides information on asylum and supports the identification of persons wishing to apply for international protection. In a debriefing, intelligence on smuggling networks is gathered by Frontex. This is shared with EUROPOL and, where relevant, Eurojust, who work on enhancing intelligence exchange and can step up investigating efforts accordingly. After registration, migrants are channelled into one of three follow-up procedures: If a migrant is applying for asylum, the asylum seeker is transferred into the national asylum system of the country, which is supported by EASO. Persons in clear need of protection become part of the emergency relocation scheme organised by the Member States in cooperation with DG HOME. In case a migrant does not ask for, or is considered not to be in need of asylum protection, the person is channelled to the return system supported and coordinated by Frontex. During the process of applying for asylum or waiting for return, the movement of a person can be temporarily restricted according to national law. The system is meant to facilitate the implementation of these following procedures (European Court of Auditors, 2017, 18, 51; Neville et al., 2016, pp. 27–28).

The following analysis provides an evaluation of the achievements of the hotspots and the coordination of the network after presenting the theoretical concept underlying this work.

3. Theoretical approach: Network Governance

The coordination of hotspots took place under very urgent circumstances, pushing actors to collaborate with each other and to be as efficient as possible. Network governance is often used to describe a society that has become more fragmented, complex and dynamic (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012; Kooiman, 2003) and is thus suited to analyse the dynamics of interconnection which have developed in the EU's crisis response.

3.1 Literature Review

The theory of network governance has developed over 40 years, stemming from the research fields organisational science, political science and public administration (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 588). According to Coen and Thatcher (2008, p. 50), the term network governance in the field of regulation refers to a linkage of actors from different institutional levels and from both the public and the private sector (Héritier & Lehmkuhl, 2008; Pierre & Peters, 2000). Another element is a shift of power from well-established levels to actors whose main role is coordinating and linking institutions (Jordan, Wurzel, & Zito, 2005; Peters, 1998; Schout & Jordan, 2005). Lastly, network governance is characterised by a change in the mode of governance from hierarchy towards negotiation, consultation and soft law (Eberlein & Grande, 2005; Hodson & Maher, 2001; Kaiser & Prange, 2004; Sabel & Zeitlin, 2007).

As described, network governance builds on a large research background analysing many different aspects of networks. The literature review will therefore exemplarily show what network governance approaches deal with before focusing more on relevant examples for the theoretical focus applied in this work.

Klijn and Koppenjan (2012, pp. 588–589) distinguish between three types of networks that are part of different research traditions: First, policy networks based on a tradition in political science focusing on power and access to decision-making (Dahl, 1989; Rhodes, 1988); second, inter-organisational service delivery and policy implementation originating in organisational theory and concentrating on coordination mechanisms and the creation of outcomes (Hjern & Porter, 1981); and third, managing networks as part of public administration deals with solving public policy problems through networks focusing on decision-making and implementation (Kaufmann & Majone, 1986; Scharpf, 1978). The latter also deals with solving complex policy

problems by horizontal coordination between interdependent actors (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 589), which this paper will focus on. However, since the field of network governance is very broad any categorization is always also a bit arbitrary (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 588). The different approaches share an interest in the relations between actors, coordination mechanisms and the assumption that outcomes result from interactions rather than the actions of one actor alone (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 589). Over time, the three research traditions have converged and the variety of methods and concepts have increased (Lewis, 2011).

Table 2: Types of governance networks according to Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 590

	Policy networks	Service delivery and implementation	Managing networks
Main origins	Political science	Organisational science/inter-organisational theory	Public administration
Research foci	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision making and effects - Nature of power relations - Subsystems, policy communities, policy networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-organisational coordination - Effective policy delivery, implementation - Integrated policy/services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solving societal problems - Effects of managing horizontal relations - Deliberation processes

One strand of literature that can be attributed to the first research tradition of policy networks, deals with European regulatory networks, which are networks combining national and supranational levels of regulation comprising Independent Regulatory Agencies as well as EU bodies with the task of coordinating regulators (Coen & Thatcher, 2008, p. 52). In this scope, Maggetti and Gilardi (2011) analyse the policy making structure of these networks and develop ‘best practices’. Levi-Faur (2011) examines the regulatory architecture emerging in a ‘Single European Regulatory Space’ which he sees reflected in the extension of regulatory capacities beyond the Commission in form of networks and agencies, whose relationship he analyses. Additionally, he sheds light on the different forms a policy network can take on: intergovernmental and supranational, public and private, informal and formal, advocacy, regulatory, and strategic, whereas EU intergovernmental networks are increasingly being formalized (Levi-Faur, 2011, p. 813). He points out that networks become agencified by being institutionalised and that it is necessary to rethink the relations between hierarchy and networks (Levi-Faur, 2011, p. 825). Applying a principal-agent perspective to network governance, Coen and Thatcher (2008) find that problems of coordination mainly caused the

advance of networks of regulators. However, these enjoy few formal powers and thus they argue, the spread of network governance has actually been limited.

Research going more into the direction of organisational science for example includes the analysis of interpersonal networks of bureaucrats and politicians (Considine, Lewis, & Alexander, 2009) and the inter-organisational relationships which are imposed by network arrangements (Robins, Bates, & Pattison, 2011).

A large amount of works deals with network management strategies. One example of this is an article by Klijn, Stijn and Edelenbos (2010) which address the question whether managerial strategies matter for outcomes. Their findings show that the employed network management strategy has a strong effect on the perceived outcome. Another article touches upon the meaning of network governance applied by public managers and its implications for democracy (Jeffares & Skelcher, 2011).

Especially interesting for this thesis' focus are network governance insights on the coordination of different actors, which are composed from contributions of all three research traditions. In the 2000s, inter- and intra-institutional coordination and coordination within networks emerged as new research themes (Christiansen, 2001; Kassim, Peters, & Wright, 2000; Peters & Wright, 2001). Christiansen (2001) for example addresses an apparent paradox of intra-institutional politics becoming more fragmented while the coherence of inter-institutional relations in the EU is improving, which he explains among other reasons with the growing interconnectedness of EU policy processes. Bolleyer and Börzel (2010) examine non-hierarchical policy coordination in multi-level systems. By comparing different forms of governments, they find that the type of power sharing affects the capacity to choose from modes of policy coordination. My analysis refers mainly to Schout and Jordan (2005) who define criteria for two models of network coordination.

Organisational and public administration theory further deals with how to evaluate network effectiveness. For example, Milward and Provan (1998) concentrate on ties between parts of network organizations conducting a four-city study. Their results showed that the most effective network was not flexible but controlled by a monopoly provider. In my theoretical

framework, I will draw on the insights on network effectiveness in relation to different structures from Provan and Kenis (2007) and Brörzel and Heard-Lauréote (2009). One caveat of studying effectiveness has always been the question “effectiveness for whom” both regarding organizational (Goodman & Pennings, 1977) and network levels (Provan & Milward, 1999) (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 229).

Since this study focuses on a crisis situation, there are also some insights from crisis governance to be taken into account. Moynihan (2009) applies network governance directly to crisis response by studying the instrument ‘Incident Command Systems’, a dominant mechanism to organize crisis response in the U.S. and a highly centralized mode of network governance. He finds that coordination is more difficult with a wider range of organizations, the question of who is in charge can be contentious and legitimacy of command is negotiated among network members. Generally, scholarship on crisis response claims that centralization can be destructive toward the capacity of the response (Moynihan, 2009, p. 898; Waugh Jr & Streib, 2006). Christensen, Danielsen, Laegreid and Rykkja (2016) analyse crisis coordination across six countries focusing on the prevalence of hierarchy or network arrangements. One of their conclusions is that there is no one best solution to harmonize competing interests and overcome ambiguous government structures. Moving further away from networks, but closer to the migration crisis, Morsut and Kruke (2018) question the mode of crisis governance applied by the EU in the refugee crisis which led to disintegration. It should have strategically applied a mixed mode of governance. However, their analysis is limited to relocation and measures by the Commission while talking about the overall crisis management and has therefore little informative value. On the other hand, Börzel (2016) argues that the problem in several European crises is not too little integration, because the EU has power to take actions. The problem is rather that Member States do not comply with the decisions taken on EU level (Börzel, 2016, pp. 8–9). This commitment compliance gap would undermine the legitimacy as well as the effectiveness of EU governance.

The impact the migration crisis had on the European Union and its policies until today, has drawn many scholars to write about the migration crisis, also outside the scope of governance. In the beginning, many analyses have been rather descriptive or normative (Dogachan, 2017; Trauner, 2016). Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild (2015) take stock of the main policy outputs

from European interventions in the crisis and compliance with EU principles. Trauner (2016) examines the impact of both crises on asylum law and policy development in general, concluding that the new policy instruments the EU and Member States have introduced fall short in terms of efficiency. By now, a series of articles also engages in a more theoretical discussion. On the one hand, neofunctionalists found evidence of supranational agency, endogenous preference change, spillover dynamics and a functional upgrading of EU institutions (Niemann & Ioannou, 2015; Niemann & Speyer, 2018; Schimmelfennig, 2014). Liberal intergovernmentalists report evidence of issue-specific distributive conflict, asymmetric interdependencies, power-based bargaining and institutional designs that enhance commitment to unpopular policies (Schimmelfennig, 2015; Zaun, 2017) on the other hand (Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2018). Contrarily, Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018) concentrate on the obstacles for integration that the refugee crisis posed. Börzel and Risse (2018) are on a similar line, analysing the crises with regard to European integration theories and politicization. So far, there has been no detailed account though focusing on more organizational implications, namely the coordination of actors.

Applying the concept of network governance to the migration crisis, focusing on one instrument, the hotspots, will firstly shed light on the coordination of the crisis response. Secondly, the literature only has few studies combining crisis response and network governance. Focusing on effectiveness of network coordination in a crisis response situation, even though conceptionally difficult, will provide new insights on both coordination and effectiveness and be a valuable contribution to test the insights that already exist on effective coordination.

3.3 Theoretical Concept

The evolving theory on network governance builds on the following core concepts (Klijin & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 591):

1. Interdependency is the core factor initiating and sustaining networks (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; Koppenjan & Klijin, 2004; Marin & Mayntz, 1991; Rhodes, 1997; Scharpf, 1978). However, actors choose strategies on the basis of their framing of the world and have different views on problem solving (Schön & Rein, 1994).

2. Complex interaction and negotiation patterns emerge in policy implementation. Outcomes are the result of the interaction of many actors rather than one (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997; Mandell, 2001).
3. Interaction patterns in the network lead to the institutionalisation of relationships between actors, which can be understood as patterns of social relations and patterns of rules (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012, p. 591).
4. To facilitate interactions, the complexity of processes requires network management (Gage, Mandell, & Krane, 1990; Kickert et al., 1997; Meier & O'Toole Jr, 2007).

When it comes to implementing policies, there are three mechanisms by which policies can be coordinated: hierarchies, markets and networks (Majone & Ostrom, 1985; Peters, 1998; Powell, Thompson, Frances, Levacic, & Mitchell, 1991; Schout & Jordan, 2005, p. 203). Networks involve non-hierarchical modes of coordination because of mutual resource dependencies of informal norms between the actors (Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009, p. 137). In EU-policy making, networks have played an important part. Due to its multi-level structure, the EU has been widely conceptualised as a system of network governance (Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009, p. 138). In contexts where the Commission and Member state governments share power, governance often also entails combinations of supranational hierarchy and intergovernmental negotiation. Therefore, these forms can also be considered as governance in networks in which the Commission can play a strategic role (Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009, pp. 139-140).

In order to analyse effective governance in networks, two aspects are important: Substantively, effective network governance produces policies solving problems and satisfying the demands they were supposed to cope with. Procedurally, effective coordination requires efficiency, i.e. the production of outputs without delays at reasonable cost (Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009, p. 140). In the following I will develop a theoretical concept which addresses these two aspects of effectiveness. First, I present an approach to assess whether the outcome can be considered effective which refers to the substantive aspects. In a second step, I will examine the procedural aspects of effective governance which focus on how effective the organisation of the network itself was. This will help answering the research question how actors have responded to the challenges posed by the migration crisis and which factors of the EU's crisis response in the hotspot approach have led to more effective coordination.

3.3.1 Assessing the effectiveness of a network

Provan and Kenis define network effectiveness as “the attainment of positive network-level outcomes that could not normally be achieved by individual organizational participants acting independently”, whereas effectiveness is viewed at the network instead of the individual level (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 230). Evaluating network effectiveness is imperative to understand whether networks and their form of organising are effective in providing services to their community (Provan & Milward, 2001, p. 414). To evaluate whether a network-level outcome has been effective, I follow the approach of Provan and Milward (2001), who state that the specific type of network-level outcome depends on the constituency judging the functioning of the network. Since their concept refers to health and human services, I will adapt the model in order to better fit the hotspot approach regarding the relevant criteria for evaluation.

Provan and Milward recognize the difficulty of assessing network effectiveness which is closely related to the evaluation of organizations, but even more complex (Provan & Milward, 2001, p. 415). Dealing with multiple sets of constituencies the services delivered and their costs are evaluated differently. At the broadest level of analysis, networks must be judged by the contribution to the communities they are trying to serve, which can include politicians, the general public and client advocacy groups. The other levels are the network and the network’s organizational participants, which will be analysed as one. Effectiveness criteria which are relevant for the hotspot approach include:

1. For the community: Costs to the community, perception of the problem being solved, changes in the incidence of the problem.
2. For the network: Range of services provided, absence of duplication, relationship strength, coordination of services and cost of maintenance (Provan & Milward, 2001, p. 416).

Conducting this assessment will reveal whether the outcome of a network can be judged as effective. The following theoretical insights will further evaluate the factors which contribute to the effective coordination of the network.

3.3.2 The relative strength of the network

Several network scholars use different typologies of network structure (Adam & Kriesi, 2007; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Jun Park & Jeong Park, 2009, p. 94; Provan & Kenis, 2007; van Waarden, 1992; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This paper will distinguish between two models of network coordination according to Schout and Jordan (2005, p. 205), who stipulate that the effective coordination of a network depends on the right level of steering (2005, p. 210).

Networks can either be seen as self-organizing systems or as steered by government. Several conditions favour the one or the other. If the actors recognize their interdependence, are relatively few in number and know and trust one another, cooperation can develop (Ostrom, 1990, pp. 197–206). Because of the strong bonds, external steering is not necessary in this case. However, particularly in a multilevel and supranational context, the complexity of the situation poses limits to self-organization. Values and priorities of actors can differ and sufficient incentives to identify interdependence may lack (Schout & Jordan, 2005, pp. 209–210). Therefore, a core active form of steering guided by strategic management theories (Egeberg, 1987; Klijn, 2003) is required. Leadership may be needed to design the network, specify the right objectives and make sure that the right actors participate. Leadership tasks involve spotting policy alternatives, diagnosing frictions and ensuring the continuation of discussions. Further, it comprises carrying out network audits and writing strategic and organisational background analyses (Schout & Jordan, 2005, p. 210).

Thus, different kind of networks can be defined along a continuum with informal gatherings without any form of network organization at the one end and much stronger networks at the other end. The first has no rules or operating procedures on how often to meet, preparation of meetings or problem solving. Higher level networks have a tradition of meeting regularly and a central organization performing leadership tasks, which can range from purely secretarial roles to more active forms of network management (Schout & Jordan, 2005, p. 210).

Another factor for coordination to work are the capacities of each of the partners, which must be strong enough to build and sustain mutual trust. This includes sufficient equipment, good coordination inside the organisation/government, organizational procedures and horizontal coordination through informal relations and coordinating committees (Schout & Jordan, 2005, pp. 210–211).

Criteria to evaluate the level of steering and the capacities of actors are summed up in table 3.

Table 3: Criteria to evaluate the relative strength of a network, (Schout & Jordan, 2005), own compilation

Criteria to evaluate the strength of the network	
Actor's capacities	Internal organisation, equipment, relations and meetings
Level of steering	Design of the network, coordination meetings, constellation of actors, background documents, intervention

Figure 3 illustrates the dimensions along which the above criteria can be measured, and which together depict the organisational strength of the network. Depending on the complexity of tasks and variety of actors, the level of organisation of both the actor's capacities and leadership must be higher to ensure efficient coordination. Network management then provides a public good serving the interest of the whole network.

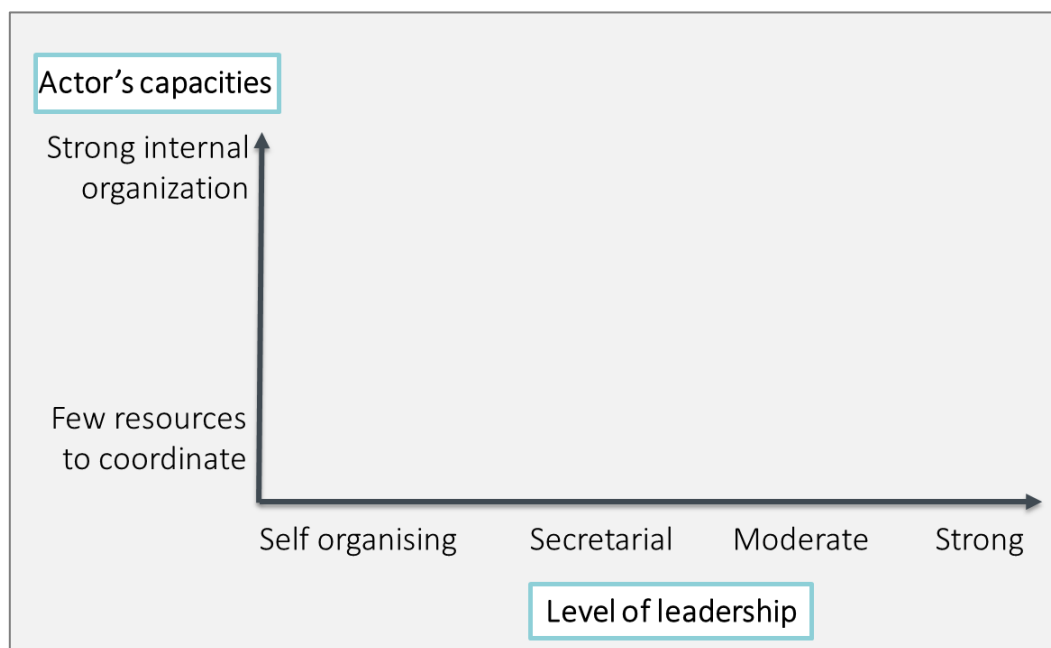


Figure 3: The relative strength of a network, following Schout and Jordan, 2005, own compilation

3.3.3 The optimal level of organisation

Research has gained different insights into what network functioning, i.e. which processes lead to various network-level outcomes (cf. Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 229). Knowing which factors strengthen the governance of a network will help the design of future coordination. Provan and Kenis refer to four key structural and relational contingencies for the successful adoption of a governance form. These are *trust*, *size* (number of participants), *goal consensus*, and the *nature*

of the task (2007, p. 237). These criteria are also in line with Schout and Jordan's concept of effective network governance and contribute to inform what level of leadership is providing for the highest effectiveness. Thus, by applying the four criteria, the optimal level of organization can be established.

Trust: Trust refers to a part of a relationship that reflects "the willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations about another's intentions or behaviors" (McEvily, Perrone, & Zaheer, 2003). It is based on past interaction and on reputation (Provan and Kenis, 2007, p. 240). The network literature has found that trust is critical for performance and sustainability (cf. Larson, 1992; Powell, 1990; Uzzi, 1997). Provan and Kenis argue that network governance must be consistent with the level of trust density. Shared governance will more likely be effective when trust is pervasive throughout the network, while low-density of trust can still be effective with a lead organization built around a collection of dyadic ties (Provan and Kenis, 2007, p. 238).

Size: As the number of organizations in a network grows, the number of potential relationships increases, especially with dyadic arrangements, and government becomes very complex. Network participants often prefer shared self-governance to have more control over the direction of the network. With increasing number of actors, shared government becomes more inefficient though, because coordination issues are ignored or take a lot of time (see Faerman, McCaffrey, & van Slyke, 2001; Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 238; Staber, 1998; Storper & Christopherson, 1987). This exacerbates when actors are spread out geographically since meetings become difficult. Again, coordination in larger networks gets easier with a leading organization (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 238-239). Shared governance forms are most likely to be effective with fewer than six to eight organizations (Burn, 2004; Forsyth & Elliott, 1999; Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 239).

Goal consensus: Consensus in objectives and similar backgrounds allows participants to perform better than if there is conflict, even though conflict can stimulate innovation. Not only organizational goals, but also network-level goals guide organizational action. While high goal consensus is an advantage in building network-level commitment, networks can be still effective with a moderate level of it. Self-governance is more effective when participants share

objectives. A lead organization is best suited to make decisions about goals if the consensus is not as high, although this is not always sustainable (Provan & Kenis, 2007, pp. 239-240).

Nature of the task: The nature of the task as well as external demands and needs require certain network-level competencies. The higher the need for interdependence among members, the more coordinating skills will be needed. Shared governance is less likely to be effective in that case. Skills that are needed could e.g. be grant writing, quality monitoring or conflict resolution. External tasks can include protecting the network from shocks as shifts in funding or new regulations and building external legitimacy. A lead organization can more easily develop and fulfil these functions and address network-level demands (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 241).



Figure 4: Factors determining the required level of leadership

3.3.4 Effective coordination in network governance

The advantages of network governance include enhanced learning, increased capacity to plan for and address complex problems, more efficient use of resources and better services (Alter & Hage, 1993; Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2013; cf. Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 229). Börzel and Heard-Lauréote (2009, pp. 141–142) have identified five mechanisms that contribute to the quality of the policy and decision-making process. According to them, the following would be ideal:

1. The flexible nature of networks can adjust to complex problems which cannot be tackled by existing institutional arrangements (Kenis & Schneider, 1991).
2. The avenues of access to decision-makers that networks provide (Mazey & Richardson, 1993; Peterson & Bomberg, 1999) allow affected actors to be involved in proactive governance decisions. They can contribute to the identification and solving of policy problems at an early stage (Joerges & Neyer, 1997).

3. Networks can provide multiple resources, which no actor could stem on their own. Information, empirical knowledge, technical expertise, financial means and support (etc.) are needed by public actors to produce and enforce binding rules (Schout & Jordan, 2005; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005).
4. Networks can help to exchange and to broker compromises with public officials (Börzel, 1998; Kohler-Koch & Eising, 1999; Skogstad, 2003, p. 326), help in the transfer of ideas and resolve conflict. This however, is only possible when networks are founded on communication and trust. When networks are unconstrained by strict rules, informal relationships are conducive to interaction and communication as a framework for consensus-building.
5. Networks foster the development of shared values evolving via the use of common language (Fligstein & McNichol, 1998, pp. 61–62). Direct personal contacts can facilitate the de-politicization of issues.

If these factors are fulfilled, networks will be better equipped to augment the quality of policy outputs, tackle major problems of horizontal coordination and enhance effective governance (cf. Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009, p. 143).

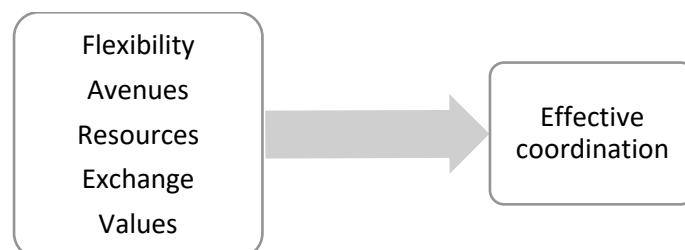


Figure 5: Factors leading to effective coordination

3.4 Causal mechanisms

The analysis of the framework laid out above will help to establish how effective the coordination in the hotspot approach was. A more or less effective network-level outcome is caused by the strength of the network, which should have the optimal level of leadership for its characteristics. Further, factors have been established which contribute to more effective

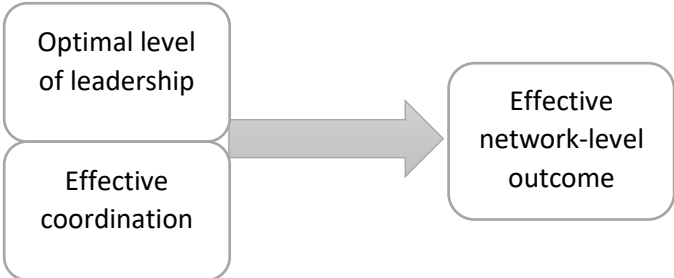
governance. Therefore, several factors will influence the network-level outcome, which yields the following hypotheses:

H₁: The more difficult a task is and the weaker the capacities of actors, the stronger (centrally steered) networks have to be in order to function effectively.

H₂: The level of trust, size, goal consensus and the nature of the task determine the optimal design of the network.

H₃: Networks will contribute better to policy outcomes, if they are of flexible nature, offer avenues to decision makers, provide multiple resources, enable exchange with officials and personal contacts foster the development of shared values.

The overarching causal relationship is that an optimal level of leadership combined with effective coordination will lead to an effective network-level outcome.



4. Methodological Approach

In order to trace the mechanisms of coordination that have developed throughout the hotspot approach, it is necessary to actually understand what occurs on the ground and the different levels, in particular organisation and the roles of the actors involved. Therefore, I have opted for a qualitative research approach which allows to analyse a situation in its depth.

4.1 Case selection

4.1.1 Focusing on hotspots as part of the crisis response

Analysing the response to the migration crisis only offers a limited number of scenarios to be analysed. To be able to examine the coordination between actors, it was necessary to focus on one element of the response as to not go beyond the scope of this paper and look at it in detail. The hotspot approach presents a good picture of the crisis response for several reasons. First, as a tool to get some control over the arrivals, it is a central piece of the EU's crisis response. Second, the development of the hotspots was rushed and ad hoc, very much like the overall crisis response and is therefore a representative example of the EU's overall reaction. If one intends to draw lessons from the crisis, it is necessary to take into account this urgency driven nature. Third, the coordination of hotspots occurs on different levels: There is a political level that centres around actors in the Commission and the Council as well as the capitals of Italy and Greece and there is an operational level which is steered from organisational platforms in the countries and in the hotspots themselves. Having coordination at different levels and places poses a very interesting example for the theory, as this adds complexity to the question how coordination would be most efficient. Fourth, the approach brings together a wide range of actors from different backgrounds. It comprises EU officials from different institutions and departments, Member State administrations from the presidencies and EU countries, the authorities of Italy and Greece, EU agencies, international organisations and private actors, mostly NGOs. Regarding the authorities of Greece alone includes the Ministry of Interior, the Hellenic Police, the Greek Asylum Service and even the military (European Commission, 2015d). Thus, the hotspot approach reflects the complexity of the response to the migration crisis. Besides, this complex constellation of actors offers interesting theoretical insights. It is typical

for network analysis, involving multiple actors and multiple levels, but unique for its circumstances.

4.1.2 Most similar cases

Moreover, since the same concept was carried out in two different Member States, it poses the opportunity to conduct a comparative case study. A comparative case study covers two or more cases in a way producing more generalizable knowledge about causal questions. It involves the analysis of similarities, differences and patterns across two cases sharing a common focus (Goodrick, 2014, p. 1). The cases of Italy and Greece where the hotspot approach was carried out can be considered *most similar cases*. This refers to cases in which, ideally, all factors are similar except for the variables of interest (Gerring, 2006, p. 139). In the two frontline Member States, many factors regarding the implementation of the hotspots are similar such as the goals and set-up of the approach, the actors present and many of the coordination structures. The cases do however differ in the administrative capacities and in the unfolding of events.

Identifying different independent variables can explain a different outcome of the approach, which would be reflected in a different level of leadership and effectiveness. Therefore, this kind of research design is confirmatory or hypothesis testing and can serve as a starting point for an exploration of causal mechanisms (cf. Gerring, 2006, p. 131). Moreover, a similar case study can be exploratory when two cases have different outcomes and the researcher conducts an analysis to reveal which of the seemingly similar factors differ and can explain the different outcomes (cf. Gerring, 2006, p. 131).

Following a research-based approach, this analysis firstly concentrates on the independent variables defined by theory. However, intensive study of the data might reveal other factors which were not included in the theoretical design. Therefore, my analysis will contain both confirmative as well as explorative elements.

The time period analysed comprises the years 2015 and 2016 since this depicts the main phase of the migration crisis as described in chapter two. More specifically, the start of the analysis is the 13 May 2015 when the hotspot approach was first mentioned in the European Agenda on Migration. Examining the implementation of the approach in this time sheds light on how

coordination has formed under exceptional conditions, but also gives a wide enough frame to see which structures have established. The hotspot approach is still being carried out but extending the time frame beyond 2016 would not yield more insights to the coordination as part of a crisis response.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

4.3.1 Semi-structured expert interviews

The primary data source used for this work are semi-structured expert interviews, which can provide depth, detail and an insider's perspective while allowing hypothesis testing (Leech, 2002, p. 665). Fifteen interviews were conducted with actors involved in the crisis response. They consisted of a set of open questions to increase the information input and which built on background knowledge from studies and reports on the hotspot approach. The interviews lasting between 30 and 90 minutes allowed room to ask follow-up questions to get a more in-depth understanding. Despite the valuable flexibility of open-ended questions, they exacerbate validity and reliability issues of this method (Berry, 2002, p. 679). Therefore, it is important to pay attention to a few issues: An interviewee is not objective and reports on a situation from their certain angle. He or she can also be prone to exaggeration, and respondents react differently to questions and probing (Berry, 2002, p. 680-681). To reconcile this, multiple sources were used and questioned about the roles of other actors, too. Further, each interviewee was first asked about his/her personal role to be able to put their statements into context. Background knowledge of the situation helped to understand the context and enabled to ask critical questions. Finally, the semi-structured form makes the interview more comparable. For each interview, a similar set of questions was slightly adapted according to the represented institution, including probe notes to ensure the respondent will cover the core question (cf. Berry, 2002, pp. 680-681). An example of an interview form is included in the Appendix.

The interview partners have been selected according to a list of organizations involved in the hotspot approach with the goal to talk to at least one person from every important institution to gain a comprehensive picture of the interactions and coordination of actors. The interviews took place during April and June 2016 during my time as a trainee in the General Secretariat of

the Council which facilitated especially the access to EU institutions and agencies. Interview partners were chosen and contacted with support of colleagues in the Directorate General for Justice and Home Affairs, which considerably helped to get hold of actors who have played a central role in the hotspots. Still, it was not always possible to find a representative for each institution and a few of the interview partners only played an indirect role in the crisis.

Overall, I have conducted 15 interviews, two of which took place with two actors at a time, including twelve face-to-face interviews, two telephone interviews and one Skype interview. The respondents comprise officials from DG HOME, the SRSS and the Secretariat General of the Commission, the General Secretariat of the Council, Member State experts of Luxembourg and the Netherlands, which held the presidency in the second half of 2015 and first half of 2016 respectively, as well as experts from Italy and Greece, EASO, Frontex, Europol and UNHCR. Regarding the backgrounds of interviewees, eight respondents provided expertise on Greece, six on Italy and eight on the perspective from Brussels. The table below gives an overview of interview partners and their background, while most of the names and some of the positions have been anonymised according to the preference of the respondent. For some actors fulfilling two positions, I listed them separately to prevent inferences to their person.

For reasons of anonymity, the information collected from interviews is being processed in a manner that will not allow to trace back its source. To achieve that, I have randomly numbered the interviews to which I will refer to as interviews 1-15.

Table 4: List of Interview Partners

Name	Background and position	Site
Representative	European Commission, Policy Officer in the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs	Brussels
Édouard Schmidt	European Commission, Policy Officer, Migration Management Unit, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs	Brussels
Representative	European Commission, Official in the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs	Brussels
Representative	European Commission, Policy Officer in the Secretariat General	Brussels
Representative	EU Official	Brussels
Raoul Ueberecken	General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, Director of Home Affairs; Permanent Representation of Luxembourg, former Coordinator of Justice and Home Affairs during the Luxembourg Presidency	Brussels

Representative	Former Dutch Official during the Netherlands Presidency	Brussels
Representative	Greek Expert	Brussels
Representative	Italian Expert	Brussels
François Bienfait	EASO, Liaison Officer to the EU Institutions in Brussels, former EASO Coordinator for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement in Greece	Brussels
Representative	EASO, Official	Valletta
Representative	EASO, Field coordinator	Valletta
Representative	European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Official	Warsaw
Álvaro Rodríguez Gaya	EUROPOL, Head of Strategy & Outreach Team in the Migrant Smuggling Centre	The Hague
Javier Teodoro Vázquez Jiménez	EUROPOL, Specialist in the Strategy & Outreach Team in the Migrant Smuggling Centre	The Hague
Representative	UNHCR, Senior Policy Officer	Brussels
Representative	UNHCR, Officer involved in disembarkation	Italy

4.3.2 Data triangulation

In addition to the expert interviews, I conduct document analysis drawing on reports by non-governmental organisations and independent actors such as the European Court of Auditors. Further, official EU documents will be examined, in particular progress reports by the Commission on the implementation of the hotspot approach. Combining these different data sources serves as a means of triangulation to support the results of the interviews and develop a more comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton 1999). Reports by NGOs can for example shed light on more critical aspects of coordination that officials would not address directly out of respect of their institutions or partners. Thus, data source triangulation will increase the validity of the findings (cf. Cope et al, p. 545).

4.4 Operationalization

4.4.1 The dependent variable

First, I will specify the dependent variable. Since my research question centres around the concept of effectiveness, it will be defined how effectively the hotspot approach was implemented according to Milward and Provan's criteria as set out above. To achieve this, I first list the goals of the approach as a kind of benchmark. Second, I analyse the outcomes of the hotspots for the community and the network. The hotspot approach has already been evaluated in several reports. Since the main focus of the thesis lies on the second part of the analysis, I will rely on these findings. They include reports from independent NGOs, scholars and the European Court of Auditors as well as the Commission's assessment. The network-level outcome will be a mixed one, of course, but it is necessary to determine more and less successful elements of the approach to be able to identify the elements contributing to this outcome in the next step.

4.4.2 The independent variable

In a second step, the organisational strength of the network is examined including the capacities of actors and the level of steering. After a detailed analysis of the most central actors, the network structure/level of steering is analysed in a comparative manner. Together, this will yield the organisational strength of the network. Then, I will examine the four factors identified by Provan and Kenis to see whether the level of leadership apparent in the network is effective. Thereafter, several factors that are considered to contribute to more effective coordination are studied. For these steps, all the data sources, reports, documents and interviews, are analysed. Finally, respondents were asked in the interview to give an assessment on what has contributed to an effective response. By analysing these inputs, factors not covered by the theory can be discovered.

4.5 Limitations

The methodology presented in this chapter has limitations of which the researcher needs to be aware. First, the case selection is based on a most-similar research design. However, while having the same approach in both cases, taking a closer look reveals a more nuanced picture.

For instance, while the set-up of the network actors is the same in general, they still differ in some respects since national authorities are organised differently and the Commission's presence also varies. Overall, the networks in the cases have more in common than they diverge. Therefore, identifying differences still is of theoretical value.

Second, most comparative case studies are exposed to the risk of overdetermination, because it is difficult to control for the correlation of all independent variables. This makes it more difficult to make robust causal inferences (Kleibrink, 2015, pp. 22–23).

Third, because interview partners were chosen from inside the General Secretariat of the Council, the perspective is Brussels-based and thus biased. Most actors interviewed are not actors on the ground in the hotspots, but part of the coordination in the institutions. Still, many of the respondents actually travelled to the sites in Italy or Greece and some of them were even deployed there, which gives the interviews more balance.

Fourth, interview partners might be reluctant to reveal negative aspects about their organization and could then report less about problems. This was mitigated to some extent by including as many different perspectives as possible.

Overall, the method of triangulation, semi-structured interviews and the wide range of actors make the results as objective as possible, reduce potential biases and increase the validity of the findings.

5. Assessing the overall effectiveness of the hotspot approach

In order to establish which factors led to more effective coordination of the actors, it is necessary to first assess how successful and effective the hotspot approach was overall. As explained above, effectiveness is considered as positive network-level outcomes which were achieved by an interdependent network together. 'Positive network-level' outcomes depend on how they are viewed by the community and the network. In order to have a benchmark for the assessment of that, the following paragraph sums up the goals of the hotspot approach as set by the Commission.

5.1 Initial goals set for the hotspot approach

In its European Agenda on Migration the Commission writes that 'the immediate imperative is the duty to protect those in need' in the general approach to migration (European Commission, 2015a, p. 2). To achieve this, it calls for a set of core measures and a clear common policy. Since no Member State could effectively address migration alone, it wants a new, more European approach (European Commission, 2015a, p. 2). The hotspots are part of the immediate action to help frontline states with the primary goal of swiftly identifying, registering and fingerprinting incoming migrants (European Commission, 2015a, p. 6).

Regarding the work of European agencies, they are supposed to work alongside the Member States and their work should be complementary to one another (European Commission, 2015a, p. 6). Asylum cases shall be processed as quickly as possible with the support of EASO support teams who help with the registration and the preparation of the case file. By registering migrants, the Commission wants to avoid that they move on to other Member States in an uncontrolled way (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2). Frontex shall help Member States with the return of irregular migrants, deploy screening experts and provide mobile offices for the identification, registration and fingerprinting of migrants. Additionally, they deploy expert teams helping to debrief the migrants to gather information on their route and smugglers (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2). Furthermore, smuggling and trafficking networks should be dismantled with the assistance of Europol and Eurojust (European Commission, 2015a, p. 6). In each Member State, the joint operational headquarters (EURTF) is supposed to coordinate the work of the support teams and ensure close coordination with national authorities (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2).

Furthermore, contributions by the Member State include adequate reception facilities and healthcare to be provided to the migrants (European Commission, 2015c, p. 2). Besides facilities in which the EU agencies can operate, the host state has to set-up first reception and pre-removal centres. On the other hand, the EU is supposed to provide the substantial financial support to the states for the infrastructure (European Commission, 2015c, p. 3).

Concerning the follow up procedures, the approach is meant to facilitate the implementation of the relocation system, returns and the asylum procedure (European Commission, 2015c, p. 3).

5.2 Evaluation of outcomes

Following the establishment of the goals, the view of the constituencies of the hotspots are important to evaluate their effectiveness. In this case, these are the concerned community and the hotspot itself.

5.2.1 Assessment at the community level

The community is quite versatile since the kind of service the hotspots provide are addressed at the hosting Member States who have to cope with the arrivals, other European Member States who have to deal with secondary movements, the public and of course the affected migrants.

The inflicted costs were not very high for the host states since funding was provided by the Commission where necessary⁵. However, because the set-up and overcrowding of the hotspots (especially in Greece) put strains on municipalities, there were ongoing tensions with local communities (cf. Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 21). According to NGO reports, the costs for migrants have also been high. The lack of a legal framework regulating the hotspots has undermined fundamental rights of refugees (Menendez, 2016, p. 408), for instance many of the migrants have been in prolonged detention with limited access to information regarding their rights (Neville et al., 2016, p. 40; Papadopoulou, 2016, p. 11). The restriction of free

⁵ As of November 2017, the EU has provided over EUR 440 million from the Emergency Support Instrument to 15 humanitarian partners in Greece and EUR 149.1 million to Italy since 2014 on top of the normal migration funds, European Commission, 2017a, pp. 4–8.

movement has been especially apparent in Greece. Moreover, vulnerability and special needs of migrants have not been sufficiently identified due to time constraints and missing tools (Papadopoulou, 2016, p. 11). Lack of information has been a problem for asylum seekers throughout the procedures (Papadopoulou, 2016, p. 15). Furthermore, reception conditions are often below standard and do not fulfil safety, health and hygiene demands (Papadopoulou, 2016, p. 13).

From EU Member States' perspectives, the hotspots contributed significantly to the management of the migration flow and therefore answered the problem they were set out to solve. Even though the rollout of the hotspots was initially 'sluggish', since many needed to be built from scratch, the set-up gathered pace since early 2016. Hotspots helped to deliver greater order and improved registration and fingerprinting substantially up to a rate of 100% (Neville et al., 2016, pp. 8–10). While during the first seven months of 2016, about 70% of migrants still disembarked outside the hotspots with the consequence of incomplete registration, in 2016 97% of migrants could be registered by establishing standard procedures (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 39). Furthermore, reception conditions were increased, the coordination of support efforts was strengthened and migrants' data was checked against the relevant security databases (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 5). In Greece however, there are not sufficient reception places available despite provision of funds, with centres hosting twice as many people as foreseen and inadequate reception conditions especially in winter. Italy also has too few capacities but to a lower extent (European Commission, 2017a). Regarding the perspectives of Italy and Greece, critique was voiced that the hotspots have not helped in relieving pressure from the frontline states, since the number of asylum applicants waiting in these countries increased (Papadopoulou et al., 2016, p. 7).

Therefore, the outcome of the hotspot approach for communities paints a mixed picture. On the one hand, the registration of migrants and management of flows have clearly been effective, even after a slow start, which would satisfy European Member States and parts of the public. On the other hand, the results for migrants regarding their protection guarantees and local communities have been less positive.

5.2.2 Assessment at the network level

The network consists of the Commission, the hosting Member States, EU Agencies, International Organizations and NGOs.

Regarding the provision and coordination of services, reports assert that the role of individual agencies has not been clear enough: EUROPOL's deployment seems to be patchy and the role of Eurojust is poorly developed. There is also no mainstreaming of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). Moreover, studies point to an imbalance among the three primary agencies: Frontex has up to 15 officers deployed in the single hotspots, EASO up to three and Europol is only present in the EURTF (as of May 2016, see Neville et al., 2016, pp. 38–39). The agencies provided substantial support to Italy and Greece, although it remained very dependent on the resources offered by the Member States and duration of expert deployment was often very short leading to efficiency losses (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 6). There seemed to have been some duplication and interference with national procedures both through EASO and Frontex since the sharing of tasks was not specified (Neville et al., 2016, p. 28). Still, overall coordination has been facilitated by the presence of dedicated staff of the Commission and its agencies (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 34).

The implementation of follow-up procedures like national asylum application, relocation or return would often be slow and subject to various shortages (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 6). The relocation system initially did not work with only about 1 200 people being relocated in September 2016 compared to an overall commitment of 35 000 (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 42). With a rate of less than 20%, there is also a low implementation rate for return (European Court of Auditors, 2017, pp. 42–43). According to the Commission the hotspots have at least contributed to increasing returns (European Commission, 2017b, p. 4).

At network-level, many shortcomings in the provision of services can be identified such as the unclear role of the actors. Nonetheless, the overall coordination seemed to have facilitated the work and support by the agencies has been substantial.

5.3 Overall effectiveness

Overall, many of the objectives set out in the beginning could be fulfilled. The aim to contribute towards improved border management by better identification, registration, fingerprinting and security checks of incoming migrants has improved significantly.

The reports however reveal a lack in reception capacities, insufficient channelling of migrants in follow-up procedures and human rights breaches.

Therefore, network-level outcomes paint a mixed picture of effectiveness. In Greece, most of these were more substantial and different to Italy, hotspots on the Greek islands are overcrowded up until today.

6. Strength of the network

Having established that the outcome of the hotspot approach is streaky, the research interest is to find out which factors have influenced that result. In particular, I want to assess which coordination mechanisms have impacted the outcome. Could have a differently organised network achieved better results? Or was the network organised as best as possible and different reasons led to the mixed outcome? In order to answer these questions, I will first examine the existent structure in the hotspots more closely. This entails studying the core actors to assess their capacity to participate in a complex network and organise themselves. Their level of capacity informs about the leadership which is required to steer an effective network. In a second step, I will analyse the design of the network, which organisational platforms exist and how actors have coordinated and cooperated. Thus, I will infer how high the level of leadership actually is, i.e. whether the network is rather self-organizing or actively steered. Taking the actor's capacities and the level of steering together yields the overall strength of the network.

6.1 Actor's capacities

The core actors which have contributed to the hotspots are the Member States Italy and Greece, the Commission, the Council, EASO, Frontex, EUROPOL and UNHCR. Other actors like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Fundamental Rights Organization (FRA), Eurojust and several NGO's have also played a role in some part, such as supporting relocation, monitoring and provision of goods and information for migrants. However, I will concentrate on the most central actors which were also the most present in coordination meetings and organizational processes. The capacity of each actor will be assessed by analysing their internal organisation, equipment and their relations to other actors.

In general, the actors in the network are embedded in a multilevel structure since the hotspots are organised and coordinated on different levels. Coordination happens on the ground in the hotspot themselves by teams of experts and Member State authorities. This work is coordinated in the EU Regional task forces (EURTFs) which are set in another central location. The inter-ministerial coordination takes place in the capitals of the host Member States, but also sometimes agencies and Commission actors are present. On the European level, namely

in the Commission and the Council in Brussels, political decisions concerning the hotspots are taken and the support is organised and mobilised. Furthermore, the agencies and organizations are steered from their respective headquarters which would also participate in coordination activities on various levels.

Italian authorities

In Italy, the Ministry of Interior (Moi) was the responsible ministry dealing with the implementation of the hotspot approach. Two departments are involved in the procedure of receiving asylum seekers and migrants, which are the Department of Public Security (State Police) and the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration (Italian Ministry of Interior, 2015). In some parts, Italy was a bit reluctant to give too much power out of their hand. It was important for them that the implementation of the approach should be very coherent with their national system. The State Police for instance did not want to delegate powers to the EURTFs (Interview 6). The Ministry of Interior has established hotspot standard operating procedures (SOPs) which lay down the functioning of the hotspots more precisely (Italian Ministry of Interior, 2015). While there sometimes seemed to be a lack of coordination among the authorities, Italy has a well-functioning infrastructure and has had a sophisticated migration management in place (Interview 2, 5). The administration is centrally organised, with decision-making powers mainly in the ministries (Interview 4). Most of the personnel deployed in the hotspots belonged to the police state, which has clear hierarchical chains of decisions (Interview 6). At disembarkation points and most hotspots, the activities are overseen by the local administration branch, the prefecture, with little decision-making power (Interview 4, 15). One person from the Department of Civil Liberties and Migration was appointed as operation manager for the hotspots who coordinated the organisation, logistics and transfers from disembarkation points, building a bridge between hotspots and Rome, the level where decisions were taken (Interview 6). An advantage for the authorities was that they have worked with EASO, Frontex and UNHCR before which facilitated the cooperation (Interview 6). Judging the internal organisation of the Italian authorities is a challenging undertaking – the strength of national administrations is usually a taboo subject (Schout & Jordan, 2005, p. 211). However, the interviews gave the overall impression that the capacity for organisation is relatively good, even though authorities could sometimes be better coordinated.

Greek authorities

The capacities of the Greek authorities had been impeded by the preceding economic and financial crisis, because of which Greece for example was not able to hire new police personnel even if needed (Interview 3). The ministries impacted by the hotspots are mostly the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Migration and Protection and the Foreign Ministry. To some extent also the Ministry of Health played a role in deploying medical staff (Interview 5). In the hotspots, the Hellenic Police is the main actor, but also the military and the Hellenic Coast Guard play important roles. In addition, during the crisis, the Greek Asylum Service was built (Interview 1). As with Italy, there is a lack of coordination among the national authorities (Interview 5). Greece's capacity to coordinate actions itself was limited, for instance it did not appoint an operation manager for the hotspots in the beginning. Only after the EU-Turkey Statement when the nature of the hotspots changed, the Greece authorities have appointed a Registration and Identification Centre⁶ (RIC) Commander. He was like a head of the reception facility and had the role to coordinate the agencies working in the hotspots. The Registration and Identification Centres (hotspots) are directly linked to the Greek asylum procedure, which are also taking place in here (Interview 5). If the RIC commanders did not have much experience, the Commission would provide mentoring (Interview 5). The only part of the administration which proved to be efficient was in fact the Greek military which helped to build the Reception Centres (Interview 3). One of the problems is that the Greek authorities are very hierarchical and staff in the hotspots is reluctant to take decisions or responsibility. Most decisions had to be taken at very high level, complicating coordination (Interview 4). This limited Greece's capacity to coordinate, even though they had some well-established relations to Frontex, EASO and UNHCR, which all had been deployed in Greece before the crisis already. Besides, Greece was very open to cooperation with the Commission after it became clear that they were there to help and not to control the state (Interview 3).

The Greek authorities were clearly overwhelmed with the large inflow of people and were also in need for support with the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (Interview 5). A lot of funding had to be provided by the EU, since Greek was strained by the financial crisis (Interview 3). Also, a lot of services have been provided by NGOs because of Greece's lack of capacities like the provision of migrants with food and necessities (Interview 5).

⁶ Reception and Identification Centre is the official name for the hotspots used in Greece, Interview 2.

Overall, Greece's capacities are limited. Internal organisation seems to be difficult apart from exceptions like the military and hierarchies impede the national authorities' abilities to take decisions. Equipment had to be provided by external sources. Compared to Italy, Greek was more open to cooperate and receive help, but also much more dependent on support due to fewer capabilities than the Italian authorities.

The European Commission

The Commission played an important role in the hotspot approach. Several departments were involved in its coordination. One main player was DG HOME, which had drafted the European Agenda for Migration and basically created the hotspots. During the crisis, they had three personnel deployed in Rome and one Catania, four in Greek hotspots, and four in Athens, where they shared the premises with the SRSS (Interview 5). The SRSS managed the political discussion in Athens. They had been tasked with the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement, but were involved in the hotspots already before (European Commission, 2015a). Other Commission actors in Greece included DG ECHO for the emergency response as well as the DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) which helped with the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement (Interview 3). While the chains of command inside the units were clear, the coordination of officials in Greece was complicated by having two reporting lines through DH HOME and the SRSS. DG HOME staff was mainly reporting back to Brussels through SRSS, causing additional coordination costs inside the Commission (Interview 5). Furthermore, inside DG HOME different teams were responsible for cooperating with the agencies. On the ground it was the hotspot team of DG HOME, but in Brussels the Asylum Unit is the entry point for EASO and the Schengen and Border Management Unit is responsible for Frontex, making the communication more complicated (Interview 4).

The different strands of the Commission were coordinated by the Secretariat General of the Commission, which implemented an internal *weekly coordinating meeting*. One factor proving very effective was that the chair of the meeting, Deputy Secretary General Vivi Michou, had an open line to President Juncker's cabinet. EU officials report that instructions were very top down, clear and straightforward (Interview 7).

Several interview partners confirmed that the Commission played an important coordinating role and provided valuable support to the Member States (Interview 2, 4, 5, 6, 13). However,

the Commission staff deployed on the ground did not always have the necessary expertise at the beginning coming from more administrative backgrounds (Interview 3, 4, 12).

The Council and the Presidencies

The Council was not actively involved in the hotspots on the ground but played a role in the political coordination. In the beginning, the Council struggled to form a response to the crisis because of a lack of information on what was actually happening on the ground. Thus, they lost time at each Council meeting in which the impacted Member States had to explain the events taking place instead of formulating policy responses (Interview 12). The activation of the IPCR crisis mechanism in November 2015 finally offered a more structured way to address things and coordinate issues between Member States.

Despite strong support of the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) (Interview 12), its role and staff are limited and mainly dealing with legal issues rather than practical ones. Hence, the capacity to get involved in the network has depended a lot on the respective Presidency. At the height of the crisis, Luxembourg, the second smallest EU state, held the Presidency. As an official reports, they did not have much time to prepare for the Presidency and might have concentrated too many efforts on the relocation decision. However, they did activate IPCR and organised regular *IPCR round tables* which improved the information provision and coordination amongst Member States (Interview 12). The Netherlands Presidency taking over in the beginning of 2016 on the other hand started preparing their Presidency one and a half years in advance and increased their staff in Brussels from three to nine people. Thus, they were able to establish useful personal contacts, especially to the Commission, where they had a very direct line with the cabinet of First Vice President Frans Timmermans – a Dutch politician (Interview 9). IPCR meetings were most efficient under the Dutch Presidency since they had access to all necessary information (Interview 12).

European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

EASO is deployed in Italy with 15 personnel and 107 personnel in Greece. The latter include experts under the EU-Turkey Agreement, permanent EASO staff, interpreters, interim staff and interim staff seconded to the Greek Asylum Service for registration (European Commission, 2016b). The numbers vary between different points of times, since the provision of experts depends on the other European Member States. Sufficient deployment has been a serious

problem during the crisis because Member States who could have sent experienced staff were dealing with high pressure on their asylum system, too (Interview 1). EASO provided training to these Member State experts, but they still have had difficulties with some of them. For example, the United Kingdom sent border guards in uniforms although dealing with asylum it is not allowed to wear them, France was proposing administrative officials never having dealt with asylum issues and Germany provided experts who did not always speak English (Interview 1, 5). Besides these issues, the agency is well equipped: their budget has increased from EUR 15.5 million to EUR 69 million in 2017 and they grew in size from 93 to 125 permanent deployed staff (Barigazzi, 2018a; Barigazzi, 2018b).

At the beginning, EASO was not very large, which made communication in the organisation easy and clear. Officials reported that the cooperation inside the agency was good, also when they grew in size (Interview 1). However, there have been allegations against the agency's director, José Carreira, concerning misconduct in procurement procedures apparently relating to the procedure in setting up the hotspots in Greece (Barigazzi, 2018a). According to Politico's sources, the internal working environment has deteriorated and the agency has been accused by staff of a "culture of irresponsibility"⁷ (Barigazzi, 2018b). Apart from the allegations, EASO has been playing a crucial role in the hotspot approach, being proactive and going beyond the strict rules of their mandate to provide help (Interview 12).

EASO has been supporting Italy and Greece to strengthen their asylum systems already before the crisis and could thus built on those relations (Interview 10). Further, the developed good relations to Italian and Greek authorities and has been cooperating with Frontex regularly (Interview 1).

European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)

Frontex had been running operations in Italy and Greece for several years already before the implementation of the hotspots, therefore both the officers deployed by Frontex and the national authorities were very used to coordinating operations and had well established commands and reporting structures, which did not change with the deployment in hotspots (Interview 8). According to EU officials they are very well organised (Interview 4).

⁷ Carreira stepped down in June 2018 denying the allegations while the European anti-fraud office, OLAF, is still investigating, Barigazzi, 2018c.

Frontex has a close relationship with EASO with whom they have working arrangements and a regularly revised cooperation plan. Also, a full-time liaison officer of EASO is deployed in their headquarters in Warsaw (Interview 8). The relation to EUROPOL is also well established, cooperating in a number of areas and contributing to each other's publications (Frontex, 2017). In 2016, a new mandate for Frontex was adopted giving the agency more responsibilities, a larger pool of experts and resolving an issue on data exchange with Europol (Council of the European Union & European Parliament, 2016).

The agency depends on the provision of officers by Member States and a shortage of officers has been a constant problem in both Italy and Greece (as of September 2016, 86 officers were deployed in Italian hotspots and 433 in Greece out of which 49 were working under the EU-Turkey statement (European Commission, 2016b)).

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL)

EUROPOL's role in hotspots is to conduct security checks and research information for investigation purposes. In Italy, they are only deployed in the Regional task force, while in Greece EUROPOL is also present in hotspots. As tackling migrant smuggling is a key priority of the Agenda on Migration, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre was established in early 2016 to strengthen their activities and serve as an information hub on migrant smuggling (EUROPOL, 2018). This allowed them to employ new staff and receive extra funding (Interview 14). However, officials commented that EUROPOL does not work very proactively to address smuggling and that their role could be bigger and more effective. This is due to the mandate they are given from Member States though, assigning a more passive role (Interview 12).

Dealing with sensitive issues, EUROPOL works with specific operational plans and has strict and clear reporting lines. In general, they have a very trustful relationship with the law enforcement of Member States authorities and treat data extremely carefully as not to jeopardize the relationships. This could sometimes slow down their work: when EUROPOL finds a hit while security checking a migrant, they first have to receive the information officially by the country through separate channels before they can take action (Interview 14).

Being present in the hotspots was a new experience for EUROPOL which was deployed outside their headquarters in the Hague for the first time (Interview 14). This posed challenges to convince the authorities about the need of their presence and activities. Therefore, it took some time to explain their role and show Italy and Greece that they would ensure the

confidentiality level of the data they received. The countries allowed them to play a role in their countries and with time, EUROPOL was able to expand their responsibilities and enhance the cooperation with the Greek and Italian authorities (Interview 14).

As pointed out above, the relationship to Frontex is well-established. While they had to make sure not to overlap their activities, officials reported that Frontex helped EUROPOL to be embedded into the Regional Task Force in a smooth way (Interview 14).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The role of UNHCR is not outlined in the hotspot approach of the Commission. Nevertheless, the organisation plays an important role in both Italy and Greece. In Italy, UNHCR supports the authorities together with EASO in the first identification of persons with specific needs and in the application procedure for international protection and relocation (Italian Ministry of Interior, 2015). In Greece, UNHCR takes part in informing and accompanying migrants during the asylum procedure (Papadopoulou, 2016, pp. 40–42), but suspended some of their activities in reaction to the EU-Turkey statement, which they opposed due to the fact that migrants became detained in the hotspots. They did maintain a presence however to carry out monitoring and provide information to refugees on their rights (Fleming, 2016).

At the beginning of the refugee crisis, an emergency support unit (now called ‘protection support unit’) was created in the Geneva headquarters to strengthen the emergency response (Interview 11). In general, UNHCR is extremely experienced in providing emergency support and is well organised with the headquarter in Geneva coordinating operations (Interview 11). In addition, UNHCR has an EASO liaison office in Malta and regular cooperation with EASO. In Greece and Italy, country officers have been deployed to coordinate their actions in the Member States (Interview 11). The activities UNHCR carried out were similar to those conducted prior to the crisis as well (Interview 15).

Table 5: Overview of actor's capacities

	Internal organisation	Equipment	Relations (coordination capacity)
Italy	Moderate Hierarchical organisation	Good infrastructure	Initial reluctance towards COM Established relations to agencies
Greece	Weak Hierarchical organisation	No infrastructure	Open for cooperation with COM Established relations to agencies
Commission	Moderate Clear but too many lines	Good but missing expertise	Strong internal and external coordination capacity

Council	Good Clear structures	Lack of info Limited staff	Dependent on rotating Presidency
EASO	Good Clear structures but allegations of bullying	High expertise Dependent on MS contributions	Good relations to Frontex and MS
Frontex	Strong Well-established command structures	High expertise Dependent on MS contributions	Good relations to EASO, Frontex and MS
EUROPOL	Good Hierarchical, clear lines	Expansion during crisis	Good relation to Frontex, trustful with MS after time
UNHCR	Strong Hierarchical but with some leeway	High expertise Equipped for emergency	Good relations to MS, cooperation with EASO

Overall, the network consists of mainly strong actors with a capacity to organise themselves and cooperate with others. Especially the agencies and UNHCR have a good internal organisation, high expertise and well-established relation to at least some other actors of the network. However, one handicap is the procurement of staff that depends on other Member States. The Commission is a moderately strong actor, capable to coordinate but with some institutional weaknesses. The main difference is between the Greek and Italian authorities. While Italy has sufficient, albeit not perfect, organisational capacities, Greece lacks strong internal organisation and has severe problems with the infrastructure.

According to the theoretical assumptions, the level of leadership has to be higher in Greece than in Italy to make up for their organisational weaknesses. But also in Italy, a moderate level of leadership would be beneficial to coordinate between the different actors and Italian authorities, since the task they are dealing with is complicated.

6.2 The level of steering

The second dimension for evaluating a network is the level of steering. A network can be either loosely organised by more informal relations or with rather formal procedures and organisation. A self-organising network would be coordinated just through the cooperation of independent actors. A strongly organised network would have more institutionalised procedures and mostly one actor performing leadership tasks. The analysis will follow Schout and Jordan's evaluation criteria for the level of steering: Design of the network, coordination meetings/constellation of actors, background documents and intervention. These are applied first for the Italian and then for the Greek network.

6.2.1 Coordination in Italy

Design of the network: The plan to implement the hotspots by the Commission was not very detailed. The idea presented in the European Agenda of Migration was just that: an idea without clear procedures outlined. No legal framework existed that further defined the roles of actors, which is due to the fact that a concept cannot just be imposed to a sovereign state. It is up to the respective Member State to define the specific procedures it could accept on their ground. Some guidelines however can be found in the Commission's Communication on Managing the Refugee Crisis and its annexes. Here, the Commission further explains key actions, operational measures, the budgetary support, envisaged steps in legislation and the role of the actors (European Commission, 2015c). In September 2015, the Italian authorities drew up a roadmap detailing its plans for the hotspots and sent a revised version to the Commission in March 2016 (Neville et al., 2016, p. 39). The final framework for the hotspots were the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which were released in February 2016 and gave a detailed account of everyone's roles. The DG HOME team deployed in Italy helped with their development (Interview 6). The fact that these SOPs were also applied to other disembarkation points without hotspots shows that having a procedure laid out helps the coordination on the ground (Interview 15).

Coordination meetings/constellation of actors: In Rome, a *National Table* was formed bringing together various stakeholders like UNHCR, IOM, Frontex, EASO, DG HOME and the two ministry departments for Civil Liberties and the State Police. Meeting every two weeks, it served as a preparation of the decision-making process in the Ministry and developed the SOPs (Interview 2, 6). For the implementation of the relocation decisions, a *coordination group on relocation* formed, which included the liaison officers of the Member States often sent from embassies, the Ministry of Interior, the Commission, EASO, IOM and UNHCR (Interview 5). Three of the permanently based staff of DG HOME was also based in Rome where these meetings take place. The coordination body in Catania, the Regional Task Force (*EURTF*), meant to coordinate the activities in the hotspots, comprised authorities from the Italian police and prefecture, EASO, Frontex and EUROPOL and one person from DG HOME (Interview 6, 15). Once a month, UNHCR would also participate (Interview 15). It was a useful platform for operational coordination between the agencies and the Italian authorities. Here, they would gather and transmit data and discuss very practical issues such as the organisation of a disembarkation (Interview 2). Since Catania was close to most of the hotspots, it was possible for the Commission staff

member to go around and meet the authorities, identify shortcomings and get an overview of the relevant issues (Interview 5). On the ground, i.e. at the docks and the hotspots, the actors would coordinate amongst each other and meetings with the authorities were organised as needs would arise (Interview 15).

Background documents: Background documents help the actors to be informed of what is happening on the field for more informed decisions. This was achieved by regular reporting: the EURTF collected and distributed data for actors in the hotspots and DG HOME in Brussels. IOM and UNHCR provided monthly reports to the Commission (Interview 4). The Ministry provided the Commission with daily figures (Interview 4). DG HOME itself issued regular progress reports in which it analysed which improvements needed to be implemented (European Commission, 2017a). Furthermore, it would contribute to the compilation of the ISAA report, which would summarize and analyse the most important information on the migration crisis. This was distributed also to Member States and the Council.

Intervention: It took some time to develop best ways to cooperate on a daily and practical level between EASO, Frontex and Europol, since they had to figure out how to exchange information and set-up procedures (Interview 8). Nevertheless, the division of tasks was relatively clearly cut because of the distinct differences in their mandates (Interview 8). The Commission played an important role ensuring coordination between the agencies, but more in the EURTF than on local level. For instance, it would make sure that the agencies exchange on how to get involved in different parts of the work flow. In the beginning there was a structural problem of agencies only focusing on their part of their mandate, so the Commission would play a bridging and overseeing role (Interview 5). It helped to create links between the procedures and putting the different elements into a system that worked (Interview 2). The most intense time for the Commission was between January and September 2016 with daily contacts to the agencies on all levels, afterwards they could pull out a bit (Interview 4, 5). If DG HOME would see a mechanism that needed improvement, they would talk to the respective agency. This could be very operational and detailed, for example discussing with Frontex to have two lines at disembarkation points instead of one (Interview 4). It is important to note that the coordination done by the Commission did not interfere with the work of the Italian authorities, the supporting and steering role they possessed was fulfilled quite gently (Interview 5, 6).

In the hotspots, the Commission did not have a permanent presence, therefore agencies and organisations cooperated more amongst each other and with the Italian authorities who were

responsible for the procedures. If problems would arise, there was always a platform where they could be discussed (Interview 15). Instead of having multiple responsible actors (the prefecture, among others in charge of reception and management of transport and the Italian Police in control of security and public order), one respondent noted that it would be useful to have one responsible person from the Ministry of Interior, like a focal point, who could oversee the process and could be approached by all the organizations (Interview 15).

Furthermore, the Commission was cooperating closely with the authorities on the decisions regarding hotspots, for example to find the right sites for the hotspots or talk to local authorities, sometimes pushing them and steering their decisions (Interview 4). However, decision rested with the national authorities, the Commission could only advise them towards a certain direction (Interview 2). This kind of cooperation and contact between Italy and the Commission would take place both in Rome and Brussels with the ministry and the Permanent Representation respectively (Interview 6).

All in all, leadership tasks were shared by the Commission and the Italian authorities such as the design of the network and coordinating activities. Most coordination by the Commission happened at central level in the EUTFs and Rome. In the hotspots themselves, it was actors coordinating among themselves and with the Italian authorities, whereas more coordination by a central position would have been useful.

6.2.2 Coordination in Greece

Design of the network: Greece was relying on the same Commission background documents to implement the hotspots as Italy and also provided a roadmap in September 2015 for the set-up of the hotspots (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 26). However, Greece never provided Standard Operating Procedures for the hotspots, because of the changes in the approach brought about by the EU-Turkey statement (Neville et al., 2016, p. 35). Therefore, the implementation was more ad hoc and organised through coordinating efforts of the different Commission departments together with the Greeks (Interview 2, 4).

Coordination meetings/constellation of actors: Both a DG HOME team as well as the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) are supporting the Greek authorities. The SRSS is based in

Athens with a team of twelve people and DG HOME with a team of four people with an office in the premises of SRSS (Interview 4, 5). The main coordination platform was *the SRSS steering committee meeting* every two weeks to coordinate decisions on the hotspots and the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement. It assembles actors from EASO, Frontex, the Greek military, the Reception and Identification Centre, Ministry of Interior, the Greek Police, the Greek Asylum Service, personnel from SRSS and DG HOME, and Member States (Interview 5). The main external Member States who were participating were the Netherlands, Germany and France because of their interest in the EU-Turkey statement (Interview 3). Besides some operational points, structural aspects of the hotspots were discussed, for example how to accelerate the border procedure (Interview 5). Once a month there was also a *steering committee on the implementation of the financial plan* which would take place together with the SRSS steering committee and also included DG ECHO (Interview 3).

The *EURTF* in Piraeus was primarily for the coordination of the agencies on a very technical level (Interview 2). Meetings of the *EURTF* with the Commission and the Greek authorities would take place every two weeks in turn with the SRSS steering committee meeting (Interview 5). While in Italy the Commission and authorities are part of the *EURTF*, in Greece this coordination mostly takes place in the framework of the SRSS steering committee. Therefore, the *EURTF* did not really fulfil its function, because of the strong presence of the SRSS. Its role increased a bit though since the crisis has become more stable (Interview 2).

DG HOME had *island coordination meetings* in Athens, which are weekly meetings with all the hotspot personnel (one person per island) connected via Skype and once a month in person. Here, all the needs were collected which would then be raised with the authorities (Interview 5). In the hotspots themselves, each one has their own *coordination meeting* conducted by the Greek authorities and the RIC commander (as soon as he/she was appointed) to organise the team on the islands in which the Commission also participates (Interview 5). Sometimes it was also UNHCR taking the initiative to call in those meetings especially until the beginning of 2016 (Interview 3).

Background documents: The Commission receives a daily report on what is going on in the hotspots from their deployed personnel (Interview 5). Furthermore, the Greek authorities have started providing regular statistical figures on the hotspots after a short while (Interview 3). As for Italy, the Commission issued regular analytical documents on the progress made and the

steps which still need to be implemented and its contribution to the ISAA report (see e.g. European Commission, 2015d).

Intervention: As in Italy, the Commission has had a supportive role in Greece providing advice and sorting out problems (Interview 5). However in Greece, DG HOME had a much stronger presence in the hotspots where they got involved on a daily basis to resolve upcoming issues. These were often practical things like coordinating with the mayor to provide electricity to the hotspots (Interview 5). The Commission further helped to coordinate between the many Greek authorities on the islands (Interview 5). Similar to the Italian situation, DG HOME would bring together personnel of the agencies if they recognized a need to coordinate issues (Interview 5). At the beginning, there was no person designated responsible for the coordination of the hotspots by the Greek authorities, a role the Commission could not replace (Interview 5). Since the end of 2015, Greece has appointed temporary hotspot coordinators for every Island from the Hellenic Police before these were replaced by the Reception Service, the so-called RIC Commander, later (European Commission, 2015d, p. 5). He or she would coordinate the agencies inside the centres as well as the NGOs. The Commission monitored the work of these commanders, especially when they did not have much experience. For instance, it advised them to conduct weekly coordination meetings (Interview 5). In many cases, different actors approached the Commission to pass messages to the central level or asked them for help if things were blocked (Interview 5). While many problems could be solved at top level of the hotspots, some things had to move up a chain of people “as high as you need” in order to be resolved – which meant a topic could be dealt with by President Juncker (Interview 5). One respondent acknowledged that the Greek authorities would be reluctant to take responsibility for decisions, so many issues had to be taken to higher levels (Interview 3). Because the Director-General of the SRSS in Greece, Maarten Verwey, had been in Greece before as chairman of the euro task force on coordinated action (European Commission) and was reporting directly to Juncker’s cabinet, he had excellent contacts to the ministry as well as the high levels in the Commission. This helped and was much needed to move things forward (Interview 4). Many actions had to be pushed forward by the Commission by putting items on the agenda, bringing them up at different meetings and contacting officials separately who could engage in a discussion in the authorities (Interview 3).

Overall, the Commission had a much bigger coordination role than it had in Italy. It helped to bring actors together and to get things going. In many places the Commission was perceived as the most neutral actor which was of added value for them (Interview 5).

6.2.3 The level of steering in the hotspots

Overall, the Commission took a leading role in both Italy and Greece to coordinate between agencies and authorities. Leadership tasks included specifying objectives, making sure the relevant actors get involved, spotting policy alternatives, diagnosing frictions and continuation of discussion as well as writing analytical background documents. It influenced both the work of the agencies and authorities. Their steering role extended in the case of Greece where the authorities showed the need and the willingness to cooperate with the Commission. Here, the Commission was involved more closely on the ground through DG HOME as well as on the political level through SRSS. But even here, leadership had its boundaries: The Commission was not able to write the SOPs for Greece or appoint managers for the hotspots. This shows clearly that the Commission will never be the only leading actor when operating in a Member State in a field of shared competences.

Table 6: Overview of the level of steering

	Design of the network	Coordination meetings	Background documents	Intervention	Level of steering
Italy	SOPs by MoI & DG HOME	Most important: National Table in Rome, EURTF, ad hoc meetings	Regular reporting by IT authorities, agencies and inside COM	COM enhancing cooperation betw. agencies; IT overseeing hotspots/ cooperation betw. agencies	Moderate (Moderate leadership by COM, moderate leadership by IT)
Greece	Only COM documents, no SOPs, ad hoc	Most important: SRSS steering committee, EURTF, coordination meetings in the hotspots	Regular reporting by EL authorities, agencies and inside COM	COM enhancing cooperation betw. agencies & EL, COM pushing for implementation; late EL hotspot coordination	Moderate-strong (Strong role of COM, weak-moderate steering of GR)

6.2.4 Assessing the strength of the network

The analysis above has established the actor's capacities as well as the level of steering in the Italian and Greek hotspot approaches. In both cases, the network consists of relatively strong actors which would in theory have the abilities to build trustful relationships. Since the hotspots comprise complex challenges, there is a need for an advanced network in both cases.

The main difference between the two are the capacities of the Italian and Greek authorities to organise and coordinate. This is why the actor's capacity level of Greece is lower than it is in Italy. Further, the analysis has shown that the Commission took a steering role in both countries. In Italy it was more on a macro level, whereas in Greece, the multiple Commission actors were involved on both micro and macro levels. This constellation is illustrated approximately (as no exact measurements like numbers were used) in the figure below. Since actors have more capacities in Italy, the network is a bit stronger organised. In Greece, some weaknesses of actors is made up for by a stronger role of the Commission, though. On an abstract level, it can be observed that the Commission steps in for the weakness of the Greek authorities with a greater leadership role and thus mitigates efficiency losses to some extent. Therefore, hypothesis 1 stating that *the more difficult a task is and the weaker the capacities of actors, the stronger (centrally steered) networks have to be in order to function effectively* can be confirmed.

It is still not clear though what the exact level of leadership would be ideal to have the most effective network-level outcome. To find out what level of leadership is required, more factors are analysed in the following parts.

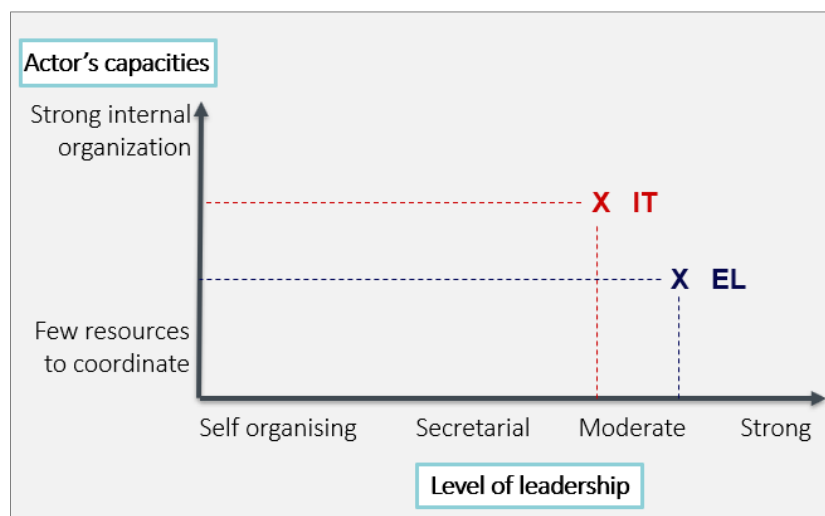


Figure 6: Organisational strength of the networks

6.3 The optimal level of leadership

Now that the strength of the network to coordinate is established, I will analyse four factors which determine which level of leadership would actually be needed for an effective outcome. These are trust, size, nature of task and goal consensus. Knowing these will serve as a kind of control to see whether the way the network is built and organised as described above is organized in the best way possible or would need to be adapted.

6.3.1 Trust

The level of trust is important to build a sustainable network. In case of the hotspots trust was crucial not only to sustain the network, but to even be able to set it up since Italy and Greece had to consent to everything taking place in their country. One respondent reported that the whole coordination was built on the concept of trust and cooperation (Interview 2). The level of trust between the Commission and the national authorities was slowly established (Interview 2). At the beginning, there was a feeling that the Commission would come to overlook processes and control the country. But due to the sensitive coordination the Commission was able to gain trust of both countries (Interview 5) and convince them that the advice they are giving is in the best interest of them (Interview 2). Having officials with the same national background was also a factor that was conducive to the establishment of trust (Interview 3). Having cooperation with the European agencies and UNHCR in both Member States was a great advantage. Especially with EASO, Frontex and UNHCR, Greece and Italy had already established relationships, hence their support was easier accepted than the role of the Commission in the beginning of the implementation (Interview 2, 10). One challenge was also to integrate experts from different Member States fulfilling tasks that are close to the sovereignty of a state like border control. Regular meetings and the work together helped to bring actors closer together and build teams which were essentially European. However, this was hampered to some extent by the quick turnover of experts (Interview 5). For EUROPOL, trust was the basis of the cooperation. While having had contacts to the hosting states before, it was the first time they were also present in the country. Especially in Greece, they first had to build up relations before the cooperation functioned well-enough before they were granted access to all relevant data (Interview 14).

6.3.2 Size of the network

By simply counting the actors in the two countries, there were about eight core actors in Italy: DG HOME, the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration, State Police, the Prefecture, EASO, Frontex, EUROPOL, UNHCR. But further actors were involved in the hotspots like Eurojust, FRA, IOM and different NGOs.

In Greece, the main actors were about ten and included: DG HOME, the SRSS, the Ministry of Interior, the Hellenic Police, the Hellenic Coast Guard, the Greek Asylum Service, EASO, Frontex, EUROPOL and UNHCR. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eurojust, FRA, IOM, DG ECHO, DG NEAR, Member States implementing the EU-Turkey Statement and several NGOs were also active in the hotspot approach.

In addition, for both countries more central steering was coordinated from Brussels through the Secretariat General of the Commission and the Council Presidency.

These are very large networks, complicated by the fact that they are spread geographically over the hotspots, Catania and Piraeus, the capitals and Brussels.

The large number of actors and the decentral deployment both call for a strong leading actor able to connect all ties together.

6.3.3 Goal consensus

If actors share the same organizational and network-level goals, they work together more effectively. The general goals of the hotspots have been laid out above in chapter 5.1 as they were stated by the Commission. Organisational goals include effective cooperation.

Italy accepted the implementation of the hotspots with the limitation that they would retain full control of the process (Interview 6). However, it seems that the organisational goals of the Italian authorities and the Commission diverged, since the Italians disapprove of too many strict procedures and prefer a more flexible approach, whereas the Commission is known to be working with detailed documentation, meeting platforms and institutionalised channels (Interview 6).

In Greece, the hotspot was implemented with the promise and expectation of solidarity by other Member States to build up their asylum service, set-up reception centres and relieve them from pressure by relocation (Interview 13). Furthermore, the country was overwhelmed by the highly concentrated numbers of arrivals and was desperate for help (Interview 5). While

some local communities rejected the idea of hotspots in their neighbourhood, Greece willingly accepted the plans of the Commission (cf. Interview 13). Another issue arose with the implementation of the EU-Turkey Agreement. This included a border procedure, the admissibility phase in which it was to be decided whether an applicant for international protection has to be dealt with by Greece or could be sent back to Turkey under the consideration that it is a safe third country⁸. The Greek Asylum Service however only accepted that concept for Syrians for which Turkey had a protection programme. This impeded the return of other nationalities as would have been foreseen by the Statement (Interview 1). This example shows clearly how a lack of goal consensus can complicate the cooperation. The EU-Turkey Statement was also the reason for UNHCR to withdraw their main support in the hotspots as it did not comply with their principles (Fleming, 2016).

Concerning the agencies, they each fulfil functions which are in accordance with their mandates. Frontex' mission is to ensure together with the Member States safe and well-functioning external borders providing security (Frontex, 2018b), which is completely in line with their role in the hotspots. Additionally, cooperation and professionalism belong to their core values (Frontex, 2018b). This is similar for EASO which was created to provide special support to Member States dealing with asylum seekers (EASO, 2018) and EUROPOL whose mission is to combat smuggling and organised crime (EUROPOL, 2018).

The goal consensus is high among the Agencies and all actors share the goal to find better solutions for regulating the migration flows, which is conducive to their cooperation. However, it can be considered problematic that the lead organizations, namely the Member States and the Commission diverge in some parts. In Italy this is the case for the organisational approach and in Greece it concerns the policy of the EU-Turkey statement. Nevertheless, the general consensus is still high enough for everyone to cooperate and find compromises for the implementation while causing some efficiency losses. Contrary to the theory, this is not done by stronger leadership, hence the Commission to decide on common goals, but rather by a sensitive handling of the situation and finding compromises.

Sometimes even inside the Commission different opinions on topics and strategies existed, which made it difficult for the agencies to know which position to follow (Interview 1). This was

⁸ Per international law (1951 Geneva Convention) and EU law (Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU) a safe country of origin is considered to be a country in which there is generally and consistently no risk of persecution, European Commission, 2015b.

mitigated to some extent by the weekly commission coordination meetings which helped to resolve diverging views (Interview 7).

6.3.4 Nature of the task

The implementation of the hotspot approach is a very complex task as it involves the streamlining of many different activities, decision making and coordination on different levels. Therefore, the high need for interdependence among members require strong coordination skills. The above analysis of the network structure showed that the Commission carried out many leadership related tasks such as conflict resolution between actors, monitoring and writing analyses, provision of grants and communicating between actors to foster collaboration (European Commission, 2017a).

In addition, there are external demands influencing the network like the provision of experts by other Member States, negotiating the EU-Turkey statement and implementing relocation. Also in these cases the Commission played a crucial role. The Secretariat General had a direct line to Juncker’s cabinet which added leverage to the Commission’s position (Interview 2). But dealing with external tasks was also a role the Council was able to fulfil, since it conducted the IPCR meetings where Member States were reminded of their commitments to provide resources and experts (Interview 12).

Accordingly, the need for strong leadership skills can be confirmed, but the hotspot case shows that it is not only one lead organisation which can fulfil high network-level demands.

6.3.5 The optimal level of leadership in hotspots

Table 7: Factors determining the optimal level of leadership

	Italy	Greece
Trust	Moderate	Moderate
Size of network	Large, complex	Very large, complex
Goal consensus	Moderate	Moderate
The nature of task	High	High

As the factors trust, size, consensus and task are pronounced in the two networks, they confirm the need for a central steering role by a lead organisation. According to Provan and Kenis, a moderate level of trust will be mitigated by goals set by a leadership organisation and a large

network requires more steering. Having a larger network in Greece furthermore shows the need for more steering as it is present in the network. With a moderate level of goal consensus, a network can still be effective, especially since the networks at hand are not self-governing. Finally, the high nature of the task demands some network-level competencies which are most easiest fulfilled by a lead organization.

Considering the fact that the overall effectiveness of the hotspots is only moderate, these four factors would indicate that an even higher level of leadership in both networks could be beneficial for effectiveness. Hence, the hypothesis stating that *the level of trust, size, goal consensus and the nature of the task determine the optimal design of the network* can be confirmed as well.

However, if there is a need for more leadership in the Greek and Italian network, the Commission faces a problem: The analysis revealed that it already exercises as much leadership as the Member States allow. Should the Commission further increase its steering role, it could damage the level of trust which has developed between the Commission and the national authorities. Obviously, efficiency gains through more leadership would immediately be lost again. One solution for more effective network governance would be a stronger leadership role by the national authorities. They still have room to expand their leadership tasks and thus making the network more efficient. So, overall, to further improve the organisational strength of the networks, the first step had to be for the Member States to enhance their capacities. This is in line with the results from examining the actor's capacities where especially in the Greek case the national authorities have been the weakest link.

7. Factors for effective coordination

Having established the most effective design of the network, I will now examine different factors research has identified leading to more effective coordination and analyse to what extent they have been present in the networks around the hotspots.

7.1 Flexible nature of a network

A flexible network structure stands in contrast to a high level of organisation and regulated procedures. So, how much room for flexibility does the organisation in Italy and Greece leave? In Italy, the organisational level of the Commission was lower than in Greece, among other reasons due to the fact that the Italian authorities prefer an approach to implementation which leaves room to manoeuvre (Interview 6). According to an Italian official, it was possible to preserve flexibility in the network by not implementing too strict rules for cooperation so that it was possible to solve problem between actors informally (Interview 6). Not every detail of the procedures was laid down in the SOPs, for example, the police authorities would communicate to the Commission on an informal basis (Interview 6).

In Greece, the Commission had a stronger role, but acted very flexible itself, since it had to adapt to the circumstances at hand. Furthermore, since Greece had not provided SOPs, this left enough room for adapting the approach and figuring out best practices. Flexibility was hampered by the hierarchies in Greece though. Because lower level officers were not able or reluctant to take responsibility, it was not always easy to get things going (cf. Interview 3). European rules further hampered flexible implementation in some parts: the access to funding was often difficult (Collett & Le Coz, 2018, p. 32) and regulations complicated the installation of parts of the hotspots. For example, it was very complicated to set up a bridge at an emergency exit in a Greek hotspot even though it was urgently needed (Interview 1). On the other hand, Frontex and EASO turned out to be quite flexible actors. EASO for instance worked together with the Greek Asylum Service to find solutions for better asylum procedures in relation to the EU-Turkey statement (Interview 1). Also, when faced with inadequate experts they implemented trainings to standardize the work (Interview 1).

In both countries, a flexible approach was both possible and needed. Nevertheless, especially in Greece, domestic circumstances such as complicated institutional structures or low capacities of authorities slowed down responses.

7.2 Avenues to decision-makers

If actors are involved in governance decisions, they can contribute to the identification and solving of policy problems. In the hotspot approach, decisions were taken at different levels.

In Italy, the main decisions were taken in the Ministry of Interior in Rome. The three DG HOME staff were also based here and took part in the National Table which was preparing the SOPs. Thus, the access to decision makers was not through personnel directly deployed in the hotspots, but through DG HOME in Rome, which had direct contacts to the hotspots as well as to Brussels.

In Greece, as identified above, the SRSS steering committee was the main platform for political decisions. Here, the good connections of the Director-General to both the Greek authorities as well as the Commission's cabinets absolutely improved the access to the important decision-makers.

In general, the many coordination meetings were conducive to move things up the hierarchy and to have contact to the hierarchy. This was for example also the case for the Commission, in which personnel on the island would report to their directors who could then bring up the issues in the Commission weekly meetings. The deputy Secretary General at the time, Vivi Michou, was sitting on the same floor as President Juncker and could communicate pressing issues to him (Interview 7). Furthermore, while the IPCR platform in the Council was seen by some Commission staff as mainly an instrument to inform the Council and Presidency of the situation (Interview 7, 4), it allowed to push forward issues as well. For instance, Commission staff would sometimes use personal channels to the Council strategically to put items on the agenda of IPCR, so they would actually be addressed in the Commission itself (Interview 12). Moreover, IPCR round tables, where also sometimes agencies were present through video conference, served as a mechanism to remind Member States of their commitments (Interview 1, 2, 12).

Overall, even though hierarchies remained throughout almost all the parts of the networks, it was especially the regular meetings and multiple platforms which facilitated access to decision makers and which thus made the coordination easier.

7.3 Multiple resources

One of the main purposes of networks is to supply resources which would not have been accessible by fewer actors. The networks fulfilled this function both in Italy and Greece: especially the agencies provided expertise, staff, and information on the ground. In Greece, UNHCR and NGOs provided substantial additions too (more so than in Italy). The Commission enabled access to funding even if not always easily accessible. However, in both hosting states, the agencies were constantly missing staff. In Greece, the procurement problems were even more extreme due to higher numbers of migrants and less well-organized authorities. This significantly slowed down the response (cf. Interview 1). The lack of experts was mostly due to the other Member States who would not provide enough experts in numbers and capabilities (Interview 1). Besides the reason that they often had to cope with migratory flows themselves, this could also be due to the fact that they were not part of the core network around the hotspots. While they had an interest in efficient hotspots, it was not such a pressing issue for them. One respondent acknowledged that the fact that each Member State has personnel in the management boards of the EU agencies, should in theory help to lobby for more experts. However, often these are not the persons who are sitting in the Council meetings, but rather stemming from the domestic respective services like the national asylum services. Thus, their priorities are different than those of a ministry official might be who is confronted more with the situation in Italy and Greece in European discussions (Interview 12). Alltogether, the network provided more resources than the Member States could have stemmed on their own. However, there is still a lot of room to improve.

7.4 Exchange with officials

In a well-functioning network, actors are in contact with the officials and able to exchange, broker compromises and find solutions with them.

In Italy, the national authorities took part in a shared coordination platform, the EURTF, and had daily contacts on the ground but in a less institutionalised framework. Both these forms of cooperation were on a very technical basis (Interview 6). Most of the solutions that were found together were decided on in Rome with consultation of the Commission. As the theory predicts, this was only possible through communication and trust. In the beginning, the authorities were

more sceptical about the Commission's influence, but the development of trust really allowed to have a good exchange (Interview 5).

In Greece, the cooperation with the authorities was close. The commander of the hotspots (RIC commander) was supported by the Commission on the ground and agencies were in direct contact with the authorities as well. However, the Commission would be the one finding solutions with the authorities rather than the agencies (Interview 10, 3, 5). Nevertheless, EASO was in close exchange with the Greek Asylum Service, also regarding more structural issues as the reforms to the asylum procedure. Also in the Greek case, these relations were built on trust which was enhanced over time (Interview 5).

However, strict hierarchies could hamper the exchange with the agencies. Finding solutions and compromises with national officials was often only possible through the Commission on higher levels, because the authorities on the ground are not flexible enough to take own operational decisions, especially in Greece.

Overall, the exchange with officials was possible in both networks. In both countries, it was primarily the Commission cooperating the most with them.

7.5 Shared values and personal contacts

In networks, shared values can develop and personal contacts can facilitate cooperation. This "human factor" has played an important role throughout the hotspot approach.

Having personal contacts ensured flexibility in difficult situations, when solutions would take too long through official channels (Interview 4, 12). This is true for the coordination at hotspots where actors got to know each other over time and developed closer ties (Interview 4). It applies as well to higher levels where Commission and Council officials would call up contacts in the other respective institution or in Member States to move things forward (Interview 6, 12). Furthermore, certain persons have been mentioned by different interviewees of having been influential both for their own commitment and their contacts. These were for example the chair of the SRSS, Marteen Verwey, with his contacts to the Greek ministry and the Deputy Secretary General, Vivi Michou, with contacts to the high levels in the Commission (Interview 1, 2, 5, 7, 12). The effective steering and engagement of the Dutch Presidency also was possible due to their very well-established contacts (Interview 9, 12). It could also go the other way around when persons have difficulties to work together, it would be more difficult to

implement policies (Interview 5). One factor impeding the development of personal contacts was the quick turnover of personnel, especially among EASO staff (Interview 4).

All in all, the development of contacts and shared values was present in the network and facilitated the cooperation a lot. Personal relations could make things happen. Maybe it is interesting to note however that many of the contacts already existed prior to the network and actors would rely on them later.

7.6 Factors improving coordination in the hotspots

Table 8: Overview of factors for effective coordination

	Flexibility	Avenues to decision makers	Resources	Exchange with officials	Values and contacts
Italy	Relatively high	Indirect	Moderate	Good, mainly through Commission	Important role
Greece	Moderate	Indirect, longer lines	Insufficient	Good, mainly through Commission	Important role

All of the factors enhancing coordination identified by Börzel and Heard-Lauréote can be found in the hotspot approach. On the one hand, a flexible approach was conducive to more effective cooperation in both countries, especially in Italy. On the other hand, sometimes a flexible approach might not have been necessary if institutional structures would have been clearer. Avenues to decision-makers have been crucial to implement the hotspot approach. In both countries the network helped establishing those institutionalized avenues. The network further provided multiple resources, albeit with room for improvement. Finally, the network has facilitated exchange with public officials and fostered the development of personal contacts. Strikingly, especially personal contacts that had already been established prior to the network proved extremely valuable. Therefore, also the last hypothesis, *networks will contribute better to policy outcomes, if they are of flexible nature, offer avenues to decision makers, provide multiple resources, enable exchange with officials and personal contacts foster the development of shared values*, is validated.

Furthermore, the comparison between the two cases implicates reasons why coordination in Greece could have been less effective: the level of flexibility was lower, the access to decision makers longer and most notably, the supply of resources was not sufficient.

7.7 Additional factors improving coordination

In the course of the expert interviews, open questions were posed that would go beyond the scope of network governance theory. Respondents were for example asked which factors in general improved coordination. Thus, additional insights on coordination were gained which are not covered by the theoretical concepts. These are:

Time: One simple factor that enhanced the coordination was time. The longer people coordinated with each other and built up relations, the clearer their roles became and ways to collaborate developed (Interview 1). This is especially true for networks which are missing a clear structure or plan. But even highly organised networks would profit from learning by doing since there are always factors that cannot be planned.

Geography: Geographical aspects have played an important role in the hotspots. On the one hand, in Italy, the EURTF in Catania is closer to most of the hotspots and enabled actors to move back and forth more easily. In Greece, Piraeus was further away from the islands and it also played a smaller role. Even though this can be due to correlation/other factors, respondents have reported that it indeed helped to be closer to the events (Interview 3). On the other hand, in Greece, the coordinating platforms – the EURTF and the SRSS steering committee – as well as the national authorities and the offices of all the actors were closer together since Piraeus and Athens are not far, and most actors are based in Athens. This was helpful for the access to national authorities and improved coordination of operational and political actions (Interview 4).

Sharing space: This relates closely to the point before. A factor improving the coordination was sharing the same space. For example, DG HOME had offices together with the SRSS in Athens. Also, the cooperation and relationship between EASO and the Greek Asylum Service improved once they moved into the same building (IOM premises in Athens) (Interview 5). For EASO, EUROPOL and Frontex, it was important to have shared offices in the EURTF in Catania and Piraeus to operationalise their cooperation by having daily exchanges (Interview 8). The same applies inside an organisation: In the Commission it would help if you shared the same floor

since persons would automatically be better informed on the work of their colleagues by simply seeing each other on a daily basis (cf. Interview 5).

Personalities: It was already established that personal contacts are important. But also the character of a person, especially in central roles, can have very positive (or negative) impacts on the network. Respondents reported that in any context the personality of actors has influenced effective cooperation, as it was the case for example with the respective manager of the hotspots (Interview 4). Another example is the head of the Greek Asylum Service, Maiesta Agrupolo who built the asylum service from scratch. Despite pressure of the EU to work fast, she took time to find the right people for the job, resisting the pressure. This prevented many problems and provided the base for a more effective system (Interview 1).

In my analysis, I identified four factors not covered by the theories applied and the literature studied: time, geography, shared space and personalities. Of course, the network governance literature is vast, so it cannot be precluded that these factors have not been mentioned before. But everything else which was mentioned by respondents or identified through analysis could be accounted for by the theories applied which speaks for quite comprehensive theoretical concepts.

8. Conclusion

The response of the EU to the migration crisis has included several measures. This thesis set out to answer the question *“How have actors responded to challenges posed by the migration crisis and which factors of the EU’s crisis response in the hotspot approach have led to more effective coordination?”*. The hotspot approach was one central action to regulate the flows into the EU through the main frontline Member States, Italy and Greece. Many of the objectives set out in the European Agenda on Migration by the Commission were achieved by better identifying, registering and fingerprinting incoming migrants in both countries. However, independent reports also revealed a lack in reception capacities, unclear roles and human rights allegations. Critique is voiced especially towards Greece where the set-up of the hotspots was especially difficult, and the EU-Turkey Statement has changed the nature of the hotspots since migrants are contained to the reception centre areas so that they can be potentially returned to Turkey.

Depending on the perspective, the effectiveness of the approach can be judged differently. The hotspot approach concerns the community of European Member States, including Italy and Greece. For them, positive network-level outcomes have certainly included the better regulation of migrant flows. Reservations prevail concerning the protection of migrants and additional burden on Italy and Greece. According to this assessment, the hotspot approach has been more effective in Italy. Reasons why the Greek approach has been less effective have been identified in the following analysis.

Evaluating the organisational strength of the network revealed that most network participants have strong capacities for internal organisation and coordination with others. The weakest links are in both cases the Member States which are not as efficiently organised as the other actors. Italy’s weakness is due to the coordination of its national authorities, but it can still be considered a capable actor in the network. Greece however has serious shortcomings in its equipment and internal organisation which is very hierarchical and does not grant many competences to the authorities to act independently. This can be partly mitigated by a strong steering role of the Commission, which it carries out sensitive enough not to hurt the Member State’s sovereignty. In Italy, the Commission plays a smaller steering role, but is still very present at macro level in the network carrying out leadership tasks such as helping to design the network, diagnosing frictions and performing background analyses. Thus, both networks can

be considered advanced with rather strong organisational structures, whereas the Italian network is overall better organised than the Greek one.

Further, the analysis revealed that an even higher level of leadership in the network could be conducive to more effective outcomes, since the nature of the task is complex and the size of the network very large, again, especially in Greece. However, the Commission already carries out as many leadership tasks as possible in the national framework. Therefore, it would be necessary for the Greek and Italian authorities to apply stronger steering and organise better among their own departments themselves. It is questionable however how realistic this would be since Italy seems to prefer less steering and more flexibility and Greek is already struggling with their administrative capacities. Other solutions to enhance effectiveness would be for instance by strengthening other actors. A constant problem was also the procurement of experts to EASO and Frontex. This could be tackled by new legislation or stronger commitment by the other Member States.

General factors identified by the theory that have contributed to a more effective response were flexibility to adapt to national circumstances, avenues to decision-makers through organisational platforms, access to more resources (although limited), exchange with officials in particular through channels of the Commission and personal contacts that would develop by meeting regularly. The interviews conducted further revealed that cooperating together over a longer period of time, being geographically close to either the hotspots or the capitals, sharing offices, and personalities were factors improving cooperation and effectiveness.

Overall, the theoretical assumptions that an optimal level of leadership and effective coordination mechanisms would lead to effective network-level outcomes could be confirmed. What is more, network governance was able to identify most of the factors making governance more efficient.

However, the framework seems a bit imprecise. So many details contribute to an outcome that it is almost arbitrary which factors the researcher defines as the most important. For instance, this work has put some emphasis on the steering activities by the Commission and lower capacities of Greece in comparison with Italy. Which factors are defined as the most important depends very much on the specific context. Therefore, network governance offers a useful framework to conduct such an evaluation. However, clearer, more objective indicators are missing to measure more concretely the optimal level of leadership, because it remains up to the researcher to define at what point actors are capable enough to engage in self-governing

and at which level of complexity exactly they would require more steering. Thus, the concept remains rather vague. Furthermore, the approach remains unspecific about leadership by whom. In light of my analysis where leadership was substantially shared between the national authorities and the Commission, it would be useful to pay more attention to concepts embracing this duality. As Börzel and Hear-Lauréote have stated (see chapter 3.3) in contexts where the Commission and Member States share power, this can also be considered as governance in networks rather than by networks. The results of this analysis confirm that. They are also in line with the findings of Schout and Jordan that the institutions of the EU will only ever be able to play a restricted leading role (cf. Schout & Jordan, 2005, p. 211).

Above, I have presented the main findings, however, this analysis has revealed many more insights into what yields effective coordination. Only if taken into account altogether, one can really draw lessons for future design of networks and forms of governance. Therefore, I am going to summarize which lessons can be drawn from the two hotspot networks:

Regarding the organisation of networks, meetings have been extremely helpful on many levels to foster exchange, find solutions and build trust. Remaining flexible as actors helped to adapt to complicated structures. Clear procedures are important for the actors in a network to know their role and build cooperation on that. Also, transparent lines of commands and hierarchy improve access to the relevant actors. It is useful to have a steering actor capable to take decisions and provide direction on lower as well as higher levels. Since having different departments of the Commission on the ground creates coordination costs and complicated reporting lines, it is more efficient to have only one leading actor. Good background information and transparency of decisions on different levels is helpful for actors on the ground as well as for decision-makers. As far as capacities are concerned, a state needs to fulfil basic capacities to form a crisis response, otherwise more easy access to funding is be useful. The crisis revealed lacks in ensuring procurement by Member States and staff of the Commission did not always have the expertise for operations on the ground.

Even though each network is different and has to be analysed in detail, these findings can help inform the design of a network in general and to have indications of what can foster more effectiveness.

Lessons which can be drawn from these insights include that more efforts should be put in forming a framework of a network such as clear defined roles. This can be achieved by joint planning of as many relevant actors as possible. Not only the agencies, but also the Commission should have better equipped personnel to deal with operational issues. Regular meetings, information sharing and transparency as well as fostering personal contacts are important elements for an effective network and should be fostered. If possible, fewer steering actors should be involved.

Concretely, it is of course difficult to change the behaviour of Member States and their organisational structures. But also inside the EU institutions there is room for more efficient coordination and effective information sharing with all actors involved. In fact, as my interviews showed the Commission is currently restructuring its presence in the hotspot networks. The SRSS is supposed to withdraw so that DG HOME can take over the management of the Greek hotspots (Interview 5). Also, legislation has been proposed to give stronger mandates to the agencies in order to provide them with a pool of experts. For Frontex this has been achieved already, while for EASO it is currently negotiated (Interview 12).

Establishing factors for effectiveness, this analysis has left aside many different aspects which also need to be studied in relation to the hotspot approach and the EU's crisis response. For instance, legitimacy and accountability issues need to be analysed to inform a comprehensive evaluation of the hotspot approach. This approach identified rather long-term factors for better network governance. But actually applying crisis approaches which are for example used in the field of the Common Security and Defence Policy could provide new insights on how to improve that first phase of a crisis response to be less ad hoc and chaotic. Lastly, research in the field of network governance conducted in multilevel settings with the Commission and Member States together should take into account concepts of shared governance.

To conclude, many of the obstacles at the beginning of the hotspot approach can be attributed to the ad hoc response and the fact that it was the first time the EU dealt so concretely together on the regulation of flows. Considering the difficult circumstances, the EU has been considerably effective and was able to adapt well to the different circumstances in Italy and Greece. Now, it is important to draw lessons from this crisis response to keep best practices and further improve on coordination in the future.

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Appendix

Interview for master thesis with UNHCR, 8 June 2018

My main research focus is on the time of the so-called migration crisis 2015-2016. In the interview, I would like to get an understanding of the role UNHCR played, how it cooperated with other actors and how the deployment was coordinated. Further, I am interested in how this evolved and which informal as well as institutionalized channels of cooperation have developed.

UNHCR

What has been your (personal) role/function during the migration crisis in 2015/2016?

How has the communication and coordination within UNHCR worked?

Relations to other actors

UNHCR was involved in the set-up of hotspots, information provision, identification of vulnerable migrants and monitoring. **How did the cooperation with other actors⁹ work?**

Which organizational bodies and platforms has UNHCR participated in? (SRSS steering committee (Greece), EU Regional Task Force (EURTF), etc.) - If yes, how useful were the meetings?

How did the cooperation between UNHCR and the EU institutions work (mainly Commission and Council)?

The circumstances in Greece and Italy were very different. **What were the main differences you have noticed between mechanisms of cooperation inside the hotspots in Greece and Italy?**

Overall assessment

Who do you consider has been the main steering actor (on the field and in Brussels)? (who took the lead in absence of a legislative framework for hotspots)

More generally, what were (main) factors improving coordination? (Lessons learnt during the crisis, useful practices that developed)

What would, in your opinion, improve coordination between actors? (What would make coordination more effective?)

⁹ EU Agencies, Greek/Italian authorities, IOM, FRA, NGOs