MAPPING MIGRATION:
Major European Migration Flows from the 1990s to Present

As Europe grapples with an unprecedented refugee crisis, Eastern European countries - including Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic - have objected to a European Union (EU) quota plan for distributing refugees, most of them Syrians fleeing violent conflict.

Eastern European countries were at the center of migration flows in the early 1990s. The collapse of the Soviet Union 25 years ago caused massive movement of people within the former Soviet bloc and from east to west. War in the former Yugoslavia later prompted scores of refugees to flee to Western Europe. At the time, the Yugoslav refugee crisis was referred to as Europe's worst since WWII - a refrain used once again to describe today's crisis.

1990

The fall of the Iron Curtain sparked an influx of "Aussiedler" immigrants to Germany
"Aussiedler" are ethnic Germans from Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union

Three million "Aussiedler" settled in Germany
69% came from the former Soviet Union, 22% from Poland and 8% from Romania

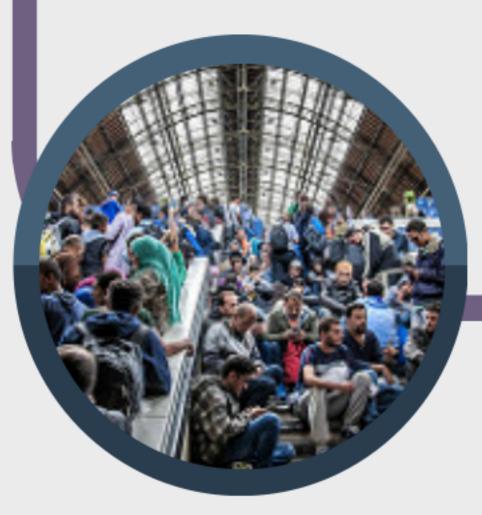**Displacement in Yugoslavia**
Over 700,000 fled war-torn Yugoslavia for the EU; 400,000 resettled in Germany

mid-1990s

Tens of thousands of refugees have entered Hungary
Hungary has erected a fence along its border with Serbia, forcing thousands to find alternate paths to the EU

2015

Under new quota plan*, the four Visegrád states and Romania will accept 25,000** refugees
14 countries – including Romania, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic – must accept more asylum applications; Germany, Austria and Hungary have already accepted far more than required

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Bertelsmann Foundation

Sources:
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Ramet, Sabrina, "Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989," Cambridge University Press, 2010.
New York Times, "Seeking a Fair Distribution of Migrants in Europe," Sept. 9, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/09/04/world/europe/europe-refugee-distribution.html.
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