



Future-proof migration management: European Commission sets out way forward

Brussels, 7 December 2017

Ahead of the EU leaders' thematic debate on migration to be held on 14 December, the Commission is today proposing a political roadmap to reach a comprehensive agreement by June 2018 on how to pursue a sustainable migration policy.

As Europe is moving away from crisis management, an agreement on a stable and future-proof EU migration and asylum policy for the long term is needed in order to maintain the momentum on all fronts – internal and external.

European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"Even if we are now moving away from crisis mode, it is evident that migration will remain a challenge for a generation of Europeans. Europe urgently needs to equip itself with future-proof means of managing migration responsibly and fairly. We have made solid progress in the past three years but now is the time to turn proposals into law, and law into practice."*

Over the past three years, a new EU approach to managing migration has emerged, supporting the Member States most exposed, strengthening the protection of the EU's external borders and reinforcing our cooperation with partner countries. Whilst the coordinated work was able to stabilise a highly volatile situation – with irregular arrivals to the EU dropping by 63% in 2017 – the trend for the years to come and factors such as climate change, the security situation and demography in the EU and its neighbourhood, point to migration remaining a challenge for decades.

The Commission is today recommending leaders take the ongoing work forward by ensuring swift progress on the reform of the EU's Common European Asylum System, further strengthening partnerships with third countries, continuing to open legal pathways to Europe and securing adequate funding for the future. Only a comprehensive approach works. Focusing just on the internal dimension and support to Member States is not sufficient. At the same time, an external migration policy alone would not solve the migratory challenge for Europe.

Solidarity and responsibility on asylum and borders

As the discussions on the Commission's proposals to overhaul the **Common European Asylum System** have progressed very slowly, it is essential that the European Council unblocks the debate on a more effective and fairer approach to balancing solidarity and responsibility. Taking into account the different positions, a way forward on the reform of Dublin could be to adopt an approach where the component of compulsory relocation would apply to situations of serious crisis, while in less challenging situations, relocation would be based on voluntary commitments from Member States. The Commission recommends that the Council looks at the Commission's proposals as a whole, and aim to endorse a revision of the **Dublin regulation** as part of a wider agreement on all the reforms proposed by **June 2018**. While discussion on the core aspects of solidarity and responsibility continues, some elements of the package, such as the European Asylum Agency and Eurodac proposals, can be adopted by March 2018 to allow the operational foundations to be laid for the reformed asylum system.

In order to provide immediate assistance to Member States in protecting the external border, the EU needs to fully operationalise the new **European Border and Coast Guard Agency** to complete the build-up of an effective external border management system. Member States must ensure by **March 2018** that all the assets and staff needed for the Agency's rapid reaction pools are ready for deployment.

Strengthening cooperation and support to third countries

The external dimension of migration policy needs to be consolidated, ensuring the full implementation of the **EU-Turkey Statement** and stronger engagement with third country partners and UN agencies. The EU now needs to stand ready to mobilise additional resources for the **EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey**, reinforce the strategic **partnership with the African Union and its Member States**, deliver the first wave of projects under the EU External Investment Plan, and replenish the **North Africa Window of the EU Trust Fund**.

To dissuade irregular migration and break the business model of people traffickers smugglers, the EU needs to offer an alternative to perilous journeys by opening safe and legal pathways for those in genuine need of protection. This will also require Member States to **resettle a further 50,000 vulnerable refugees** by May 2019. At the same time, Member States need to deliver on **swift and efficient return and readmission** of those who have no right to stay in the EU. Member States should ensure a fully functioning return capacity within the European Border and Coast Guard Agency by May 2018 and increase by June 2018 the number of returned migrants in operations organised in cooperation with the Agency by 50% compared to 2017. .

Through the joint European Union / African Union / United Nations Task Force established on 29 November 2017, Member States should support the International Organisation for Migration to accelerate returns from Libya, with an additional 15,000 assisted voluntary returns funded by the Commission to be carried out by February 2018.

More and flexible funding to manage migration

Managing migration is a major challenge which requires financial investment. Since 2015, the EU has increased by almost 75% the funding made available under the Asylum, Migration and Internal Security funds and for EU Agencies. Moving forward, leaders should reflect on how to guarantee funding for the external dimension of migration and ensure rapid mobilisation of resources to address the root causes of migration and ensure the protection of refugees and migrants. The **next Multiannual Financial Framework** (the EU's 7-year budget) should reflect the experience of the past three years and provide flexible instruments to respond to future migratory challenges.

Background

Upon taking office, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker entrusted a Commissioner with special responsibility for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, to work under the coordination of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans on a new policy on migration, as one of the [10 Political Priorities](#) of the Juncker Commission.

On 13 May 2015, the European Commission proposed a far-reaching [European Agenda on Migration](#) to tackle the immediate challenges of the 2015 crisis and equip the EU with the tools to better manage migration in the medium and long term.

On 7 June 2016, the European Commission and the High Representative launched the Migration Partnership to reinforce cooperation with countries of origin and transit, mainly in Africa, to better jointly manage migration.

The Thematic Debate to be held under the Leaders' Agenda at the December European Council provides an opportunity to reflect on how to pursue a sustainable migration policy for the EU and to give a strategic orientation on the key policy suggestions set out in the Commission's Communication.

For More Information

Legislative documents

[Communication: Commission contribution to the EU Leaders' thematic debate on a way forward on the external and the internal dimension of migration policy](#)

Factsheets

[Factsheet 1: Migration: A roadmap](#)

[Factsheet 2: Migration and borders – State of Play of Main Proposals](#)

[Factsheet 3: Overhauling the EU's asylum rules](#)

[Factsheet 4: The European Border and Coast Guard Agency](#)

[Factsheet 5: EU budget for the refugee crisis and improving migration management](#)

[Factsheet 6: Migration: Solidarity within the EU](#)

[Factsheet 7: Resettlement and legal migration](#)

[Factsheet 8: Working with partner countries](#)

[Factsheet 9: The EU's Key Partnership with Africa](#)

[Factsheet 10: EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[Factsheet 11: EU Action in Libya on Migration](#)

[Factsheet 12: EU-Turkey Statement](#)

[Factsheet by the European Political Strategy Centre \(EPSC\): 10 trends shaping migration](#)

ANNEX: Roadmap to a deal by June 2018

ROADMAP TO A DEAL BY JUNE 2018 ON THE COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION PACKAGE



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