

EU Migration: Time for an ambitious human rights-based agenda

On 14 and 15 December EU Heads of State are expected to discuss the internal and external dimension of the EU's migration policy. Instead of proposing policies that represent only the lowest common denominator between member states, the EU should put forward a principled agenda that addresses migration in both a humane and effective way. European leaders should leverage the attention to migration and displacement to promote global policies that are deeply embedded in a strong human-rights agenda.

Ahead of the European Council meeting in Brussels, and cognisant of the process leading to the adoption of the Global Compacts on Refugees and for Migration, the undersigned humanitarian, development and human rights organisations call on leaders to adopt asylum and migration policies in accordance with the following recommendations:

1. **A permanent, equitable mechanism for responsibility-sharing should be established as part of the reformed Dublin Regulation**, taking into consideration needs, skills, family links and preferences of asylum seekers and fully respecting the best interest of the child. Vulnerability should be prioritised over any considerations related to the recognition rates of certain nationalities when asylum-seekers are transferred from the member state of first entry. Only an ambitious, structural and sustainable overhaul of existing policies will address the current gaps in the system.
2. **The EU's migration agenda should include strong human rights commitments.** The EU should demonstrate greater leadership as a global defender and promotor of respect for human rights. To prevent abuses, effective and transparent human rights monitoring and accountability mechanisms must be established as part of the EU's external migration policy, especially when it comes to the mandates of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the EU Agency for Asylum.
3. **Budgetary commitments, both within the EU's annual budget and the upcoming Multi-Annual Financial Framework, should reflect the EU's priorities on protection and human rights.** Instead of allocating disproportionate funds towards securing external borders, the EU should re-prioritise investments towards a longer-term agenda on stability and resilience. Flexible instruments must come with adequate safeguards to ensure that development funds are spent only for the purpose of achieving development aid objectives - eradicating poverty and reducing inequality - and meeting humanitarian needs.
4. The ineffectiveness of the partnership approach has shown that **investing in safe and regular migration pathways** is essential for a well-functioning external migration policy. Increasing resettlement is a necessary step forward but only when it aims at assisting those people and countries where the need is the highest. Greater mobility into the EU must also be facilitated through humanitarian admission, humanitarian visas, family reunification, worker mobility across skill levels and student visas.
5. **Human rights abuses suffered by migrants and asylum seekers at or outside of EU's borders must be meaningfully addressed**, instead of solely focusing on preventing arrivals and outsourcing responsibility to third countries. This should imply as a matter of priority putting an end to the containment of asylum seekers on the Greek Aegean Islands and ensuring that no one intercepted in the Central Mediterranean is sent back to serious abuse.

Signatories:

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Action Against Hunger

Access Info Europe

Association Européenne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme

Ayuda en Acción

CARE International

Caritas Europa

CCME

CIRE

CNCD-11.11.11

Coordination SUD

Danish Refugee Council

ENAR – European Network against racism

Entreculturas

EU-CORD

European Evangelical Alliance

FIDH-International Federation for Human Rights

Flemish Refugee Action

Human Rights Watch

ILGA-Europe

International Rescue Committee

Kehys, the Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU

Medecins du Monde

Mercy Corps Europe

Migration Policy Group

National Spanish NGDO Platform

Norwegian Refugee Council

Oxfam

PAX

PICUM

Safe Passage

Save the Children

Terre des Hommes

World Vision