

#MigrationEU

# Delivering on operational measures



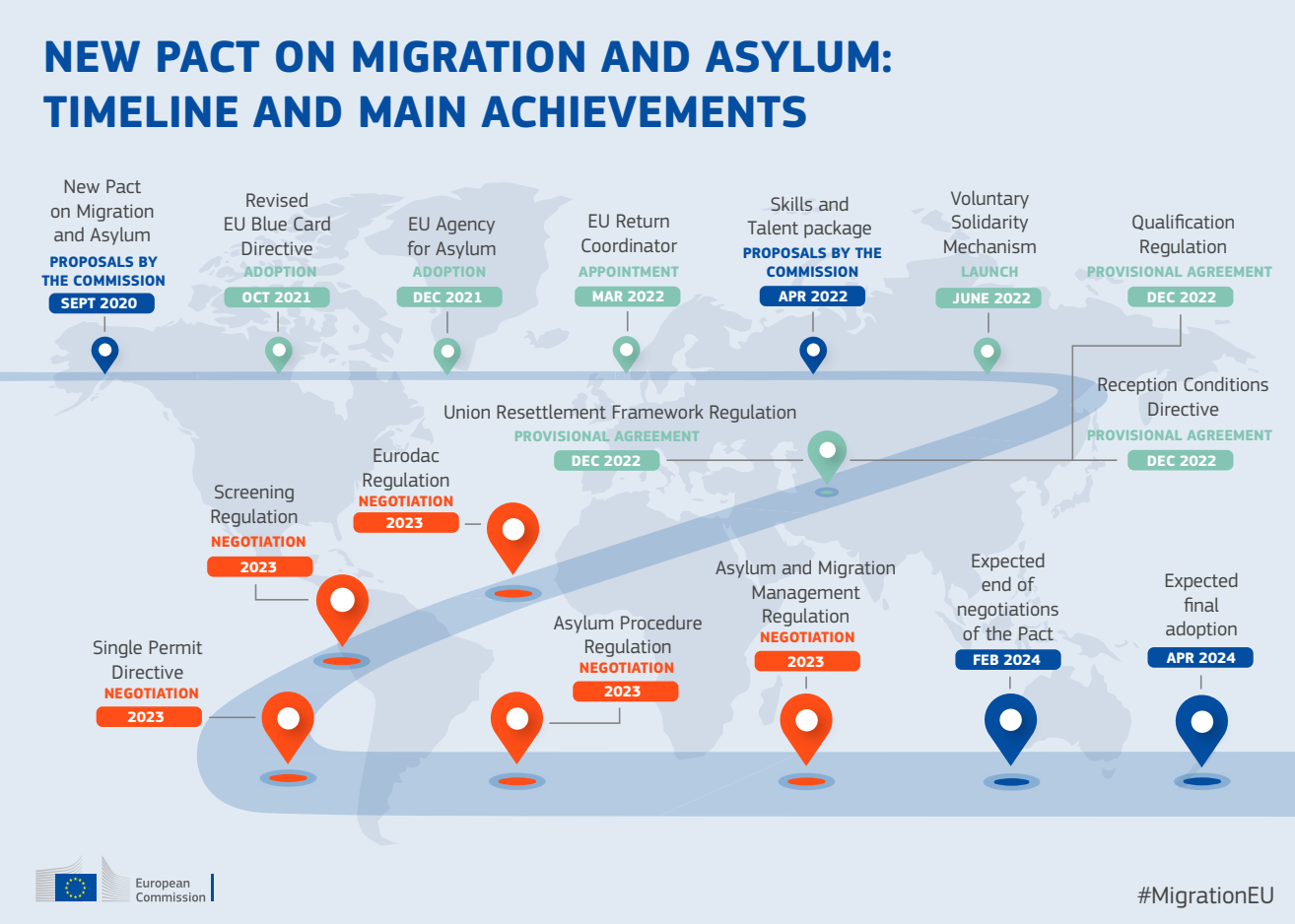


“The persistence of migration as a critical concern shows that only a major renewal of our legal framework can offer a strong and sustainable foundation for EU action. But the imperative of agreeing a structural solution does not mean that we cannot act now. On the contrary, in recent years we have already deepened our border management and migration toolbox, with stronger agencies, greater resources and more targeted work on migration with key partners.”

*Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President, 26 January 2023*

## Progress on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

The European Commission welcomes the general approach reached by the Member States at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 8 June on the two pillars of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum: the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation and the Asylum Procedure Regulation. This is a real breakthrough after years of intense negotiations. The Commission stands ready to work with the co-legislators to ensure agreement on all the Pact files as set out in the Joint Roadmap to finalise negotiations by February 2024.



## Strengthening the work with key partners



### Fighting smuggling

The Commission is working tirelessly to ensure the EU is prepared to address new modi operandi of migrant smuggling networks. The Toolbox addressing the use of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration to the EU which the Commission presented on 6 June together with the latest Action Plan on Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic routes sets out measures to counter the use of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration to the EU. It gathers operational, diplomatic measures and legal instruments in 3 pillars of action:



#### Operational framework



#### Situational awareness



#### Engagement with partner countries and transport operators

The Commission will launch a new anti-smuggling operational partnership with Egypt in 2023, building on those in place with Tunisia, Morocco, Niger, and the Western Balkans, with the support of Europol, Eurojust and Frontex. A €152 million comprehensive programme on migration will strengthen Morocco's border management actions in the fight against smuggling networks, the National Strategy of Morocco on Immigration and Asylum, as well as the voluntary return and the reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin, in accordance with international standards in terms of human rights. The Commission, will also work towards advancing negotiations **Frontex Status Agreements** with Mauritania and Senegal allowing operational cooperation with Frontex.

A new programme to strengthen the operational capacity of the Egyptian Coast and Border Guards through effective search and rescue and border surveillance.

## Supporting Member States along the migratory routes

Progress on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum is indispensable for a strong, sustainable EU migration policy. The challenges we face today mean that we need to act in parallel on a set of operational measures to advance our collective response even before the new legislation is agreed.



### Action Plan on Western Mediterranean and Atlantic routes

Earlier in June, the Commission is presented an EU Action Plan on the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic routes. The Action Plan contains 18 operational measures to address the common and ongoing challenges, articulated around 2 pillars:

- Strengthen cooperation with partner countries along the routes
- Ensure more effective border management, search and rescue and return procedures, as well as smoother and faster voluntary solidarity.

This Action Plan follows the EU Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean (November 2022) and the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans (December 2022).

Work continues on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean, with two more vessels delivered to the Libyan Coast Guard to reinforce search and rescue capabilities.



### Cooperation on Search and Rescue

The Search and Rescue (SAR) Contact Group met for the fourth time on 16 June. The Contact Group agreed to intensify efforts working towards a closer framework of cooperation on SAR.

Several concrete areas have been discussed to work towards a closer framework of cooperation, including:

- Identifying and sharing dedicated focal points: ensure systematic, timely and detailed information sharing for improved situational awareness.
- A pilot project led by Italy and Frontex. It will start shortly among the most concerned Rescue centres, on a voluntary basis, focusing both on real time incidents and sharing ex-post analysis.
- Engaging in technical level discussions on information that shipmasters may be asked to collect on board a ship after a rescue, with a view to facilitate further disembarkation.



### Deploying Frontex in the Western Balkans

The Commission is committed to supporting our partners in the Western Balkans. This is why we propose to negotiate new status agreements under Frontex's strengthened mandate. This allows for the deployment of Frontex, in principle, on the entire territory of the Western Balkans partner countries with the full power of its mandate.

The first of such status agreements was signed with Moldova in March 2022 and the second with North Macedonia in October 2022 and the third in May with Montenegro. The Commission is currently negotiating with Serbia and a new agreement with Albania will be finalised shortly. Negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on such an agreement are expected to start soon.



### Visa Policy

The Commission adopted on 30 May a Communication on monitoring of the EU's visa free regimes. This Communication outlines the key challenges in the implementation of the EU's visa free policy and paves the way for the revision of the Visa Suspension Mechanism.

The Communication presents the main challenges in this regard.

- Visa policy alignment
- Unfounded asylum applications lodged by nationals of visa-free countries with low recognition rates;
- Investor citizenship schemes operated by third countries with visa-free access to the EU.

The Commission will present in autumn 2023 a legislative proposal revising the visa suspension mechanism provided for in Article 8 of the Visa Regulation.



## Legal migration

The Commission will work with Member States to ensure a targeted use of resettlement and complementary pathways along the main migratory routes. The goal is to provide new funding to expand safe and legal avenues for protection.

The 2024-2025 pledging exercise is ongoing with a deadline to submit pledges by 15 September 2023. Additional funding for resettlement available to

Member States on their programmes with over 490 million euro over 2023 – 2025.

We are also advancing on a **Talent Partnerships** with Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Additional funding is foreseen for adoption by end of 2023 on Technical and Vocational Education on sustainable reintegration of returnees and the Talent Partnership with Pakistan.

## Accelerating asylum procedures and expediting returns



### Update: Romanian – Bulgarian pilot projects

The Pilot Projects were launched in March 2023 for 6 months building on good practices and experience in Bulgaria and Romania in the areas of asylum, returns, border management and international cooperation.

**The Commission welcomed the progress made by the two countries as the full roll-out of the Pilot Projects is foreseen by September 2023.**

Both countries strengthened the cooperation with the EU Agency for Asylum, enhancing the capacity for reception and for processing asylum applications.

Bulgaria has also strengthened the cooperation with Europol to counter-smuggling networks and to limit the secondary movements within the EU.

Romania changed its legislation in May 2023 to allow a more efficient return process, preventing absconding and secondary movements. In May 2023 Romania joined the Frontex Joint Reintegration Services programme, which provides reintegration support for returns.

The Commission also provided **new financial support to Romania and Bulgaria for border management.**

Bulgaria will receive EUR 45 million and Romania EUR 10,8 million. The funds will be added to the national programmes under the Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) home affairs funding.



### More effective returns

Action on returning those with no right to stay in the EU have been taken through further steps towards a common EU system for return, including through the Return Coordinator's work with the High Level network on returns, increased support of Frontex and continuous engagement with third countries.

Practical implementation of the Recommendation on mutual recognition of return decisions progressing and **80 000 return alerts were already triggered introduced in the Schengen Information System.**

A new round of readmission negotiations took place with Nigeria in Brussels at the end of May. Once a positive outcome of the EU-Nigeria readmission agreement negotiations is reached, new funding for return and reintegration in Nigeria can be considered.

The Commission also continued working closely with Pakistan, following up to the November 2022 mission by Commissioner Johansson. Additional funding is foreseen for adoption by end of 2023 on Technical and Vocational Education on sustainable reintegration of returnees and the Talent Partnership with Pakistan.

**The EU should have a common list of Safe Third Countries and Safe Countries of Origin.** The

Commission will support co-legislators to establish such lists together with ongoing work carried out by the EU Agency for Asylum.



# Addressing secondary movements and ensuring effective solidarity



## Reducing secondary movements

Unauthorised movements within the EU undermine trust between the Member States which is essential to sustain an area free from internal borders. Whilst we work to renew the EU's legal framework, the existing rules need to be applied in full.

- The European Union Asylum Agency is **mapping the situation of reception** and detention in all Member States.
- The Commission presented an analysis of the discrepancies in the **Eurodac registration** of irregular arrivals
- The Commission met with all Member States in May 2023 to identify and resolve gaps in the implementation of the **Dublin system**, which determines which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum claim.
- The Commission will present a set of good practices to enhance the effectiveness of the Dublin Regulation.



## Showing solidarity in practice

Since June 22, the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism continues to act as a precursor to a permanent system under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

**1890** relocations have been carried out to date from all MED5 countries, out of over **8000** pledges made by **13** Member States. In parallel, contributing States are providing financial support for the implementation of projects in migration management in the Mediterranean countries. The signatory States agreed to continue implementing this mechanism beyond June 2023, in order to deliver on the pledges made and the financial contributions committed.