

Presidency Resolution on Migration
Adopted at the Political Assembly 23-24 February 2026

The EPP Political Assembly,

Considering that migration is a high political priority and citizens expect that the European Union manages migration and asylum effectively, preventing illegal migration, protecting people in need and attracting talent to enhance its competitiveness.

We endorse the Commission's European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy that reaffirms the Union's ambition to put in place a framework that is fair, firm and adaptable to the developments in Europe and worldwide.

The Union's action needs to prevent smugglers, including state actors, from putting peoples' lives at risk in dangerous journeys, to protect against human rights abuses of those who are trafficked and to sustain the reduction in illegal arrivals to the EU, reducing the pressure on asylum and migration systems. It should also counter abuses of Europe's social security systems designed to provide protection to people in genuine need. The specific phenomenon of instrumentalization of migration happening at EU's Eastern borders must be addressed forcefully. Stopping illegal immigration is necessary for the effective implementation of the reforms of the Pact on Migration and Asylum which is being complemented to respond to such specific phenomena.

We recall that large-scale or poorly coordinated regularisation schemes at national level risk weakening the credibility of the Union's migration policy, generating strong pull factors and triggering secondary movements within the Schengen area. We underline that residence permits issued by Member States are not a blank cheque for free movement within the Union and must not be misused to bypass common asylum and migration rules. European rules must be strictly respected, with any abuse effectively addressed. Stronger monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are needed to prevent unauthorised secondary movements and abuses of national residence schemes.

The tangible results of the last years, notably the reduction of illegal arrivals and of asylum applications, combined with enhanced operational cooperation within and outside the Union, provide an opportunity to turn the page and open a new chapter on the EU's migration and asylum policy.

We advocate for a resilient and assertive migration diplomacy, which promotes the Union interests on the world stage. In a spirit of joint sharing of responsibility with partner countries along all migratory routes, we call for expanding the concept of comprehensive partnerships and the whole-of-route approach, hereby working in cooperation with the UNHCR, IOM, ICMPD and other relevant actors to prevent dangerous journeys, dismantle smuggling networks, and provide protection closer to countries of origin. Existing multi-purpose centres should be supported, and new ones set up, to make the whole-of-route approach operational. We promote the use of incentives and leverage in visa, trade, talent mobility and external funding to ensure cooperation on migration management and readmission of irregular migrants. Such an external strategy requires full internal coherence. In line with the principle of sincere cooperation, Member States must therefore ensure that national migration decisions do not produce negative consequences for other parts of the Union.

We call for strong control and security of EU borders. In this context we need a significant increase in technical and human resources in order to strengthen border surveillance by means of drones,

satellite technologies, and a greater presence of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) at the EU's external borders when a Member State so requests. Therefore, we call for a revision of the Frontex Regulation in 2026 to expand its mandate to be able to support Member States, including by increasing its resources, reinforcing activities in partner countries and on return, and deploying advanced technologies. Furthermore, we support accelerating the roll-out of digital systems like the Entry/Exit System (EES), ETIAS, and Eurodac, and enhanced interoperability of databases to control access to the Union, prevent illegal entry, detect overstayers and unauthorised secondary movements. An effective data exchange between all Member States and Frontex has to be ensured. We call for coordination between the Commission and Member States to declare states of emergency at Europe's external borders when countries face severe migratory pressure, including cases of instrumentalization of migrants. Additional measures are needed to prevent the abuse of the Schengen Area by criminal networks and unauthorised secondary movements. Given the current political developments in Syria and IS fighters being transferred to Iraq, the EU must be vigilant and step up its external border security. We welcome the most recent initiatives by the Commission and urge to present further measures to address the phenomenon of weaponisation of migrants by third countries and non-state actors, including any exceptional measures necessary to ensure the security of our borders and the inviolability of our territory.

We stress the need to systematically link migration management with internal security policies, including the fight against organised crime, trafficking networks and radicalisation. Priority must be given to the swift return of irregular migrants posing security or public order risks.

We welcome a fair and firm system that builds on the Pact and can rapidly respond to emerging challenges. We call for the full implementation of the Pact, in particular the mandatory screening of illegal arrivals and border procedures, and the modernisation of asylum procedure, also using EU technologies and AI. Therefore, it is necessary that all data of the screening processes are collected in an easily interchangeable digital format and all other Member States, and their authorities can access that data.

We support exploring new solutions, building on the revision of the safe third country concept and on the EU list of safe countries of origin, with the objective of ensuring that asylum systems remain focused on those genuinely in need of protection. Asylum must not be misused as an alternative pathway to irregular migration. Manifestly unfounded applications should be processed swiftly, with reinforced verification and enforcement mechanisms against fraud and repeated abuse. The implementation of the first Solidarity Pool is key to guarantee the balance between solidarity and responsibility that underpins the Pact. The majority of the illegal migrants applying for asylum do not receive any protective status at the end of their procedure. Furthermore, most of the illegal migrants arriving in the EU are young and strong and were able to afford the rather expensive journey to Europe. The oldest, poorest and weakest people do not have a chance to reach Europe through illegal migration.

That is why we need a fundamental change of our EU migration system, as a long-term objective, leading to more humanity and less abuse: We should replace illegal migration with resettlement contingents, which consider the capacity of our European societies.

As a first step, the EU should consider an update of the 2011/95/EU and 2013/33/EU directives and a review of the notion of subsidiary protection. This would allow a faster return of refugees after the

end of a civil war in their countries of origin. We urge all member states of the Council of Europe to adopt an additional protocol on asylum and migration to the European Convention on Human Rights to ensure that the EU Member States will be able to effectively defend their external borders against illegal migration and to return criminal foreigners' home or to safe third countries. We welcome the important reform initiative of 27 member states of the Council of Europe of 10 December 2025.

For Ukrainians, we advocate a coordinated transition from temporary protection to a more stable framework, as well as support to voluntary return for people willing to go back to Ukraine.

We demand more effective returns and readmission to safeguard the integrity of the EU's migration and asylum system, and to uphold public confidence in common rules. Finding an agreement on the proposal for a Return Regulation is of utmost importance and should be prioritised, advancing on a more European dimension of return through mutual recognition, and setting the ground to establish return hubs. In particular, the EU must ensure the enforcement of returns who pose a security threat.

We support scaling up talent mobility to fill the skills gap in the labour market and support European competitiveness, ensuring effective economic and social integration and respect for European values. Europe needs to upscale its cooperation with partners in the context of the existing Talent Partnerships with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and pursue new ones where relevant, for instance in the framework of the Pact for the Mediterranean. Priority should be given to countries and regions of the world that share our European values or are close to those values. The EU needs to establish as well European Legal Gateway Offices, inspired by the pilot to be opened in India, as part of the Union's migration diplomacy. We support the simplification and acceleration of the processes to attract skilled workers, researchers, students, start-up founders or innovative entrepreneurs, as well as workers required for shortage occupations in key sectors such as healthcare and construction. Simplifying rules on the recognition of qualifications will also be key to that effect.

Europe's migration policy will only be successful if EU funding is aligned with EU priorities. Therefore, we call for a strategic use of the Union's financial resources under the proposed MFF 2028-2034, to ensure predictable funding for migration across the EU budget, alongside Member States' responsibility to effectively manage the funds allocated through the National and Regional Partnership Plans in support of a fair and firm migration policy. The Global Europe Instrument must also be adequately funded to strengthen our priorities and enhance cooperation with partner countries. To this end, EU financial support must be linked to measurable results in border management, effective returns and concrete cooperation on readmission.