

Annex: EU Migration Management 2021-2026

Milestones



A common European approach

- 2020:** **Pact on Migration and Asylum** proposed
- 2024:** Pact adopted. Common Implementation Plan
- 2025:** First **Annual Migration Management Cycle**. First Solidarity Pool
- 2026:** **Full application of the Pact**
First five-year European Asylum and Migration Management **Strategy**
Revised **safe-third-country** rules and EU list of **safe countries of origin**
- Forthcoming:** Second **Annual Migration Management Cycle**



A robust external migration policy

Partnerships. Cooperation with key countries of origin and transit

- 2023:** Tunisia
- 2024:** Egypt. Mauritania
- 2025:** Jordan
- Forthcoming:** Ongoing discussions on further Partnerships with key countries (Senegal, Morocco)

EU Action Plans by route

- 2022:** Central Mediterranean. Western Balkans
- 2023:** Western Mediterranean and Atlantic. Eastern Mediterranean
- 2026:** Channel. Launch of the Eastern Corridor initiative



Borders. Return

- 2019:** **European Border and Coast Guard** Regulation
- 2022:** **EU Return Coordinator** appointed. **High Level Return Network** operational
- 2023:** Renewed **Schengen Information System**
- 2025:** Return **Regulation** proposed
Entry/Exit System rollout
- 2026:** Return Regulation adopted
5-point Plan to prevent, anticipate and respond to sudden, mass illegal arrivals
- Forthcoming:** Revised **Frontex** mandate, **Digitalisation** of the return, readmission and reintegration case management



Anti-smuggling

- 2023:** Launch of the **Global Alliance** to Counter Migrant Smuggling
- 2025:** Second edition of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling
- 2026:** First Senior Official's Meeting of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling



Visa

- 2021:** Partial suspension of the **Belarus** Facilitation Agreement
- 2022:** Suspension of the **Russia** Facilitation Agreement
- 2025:** **Visa Suspension Mechanism**
- 2026:** First **EU Visa Strategy**
Adoption of a **visa ban for Russian combatants**
- Forthcoming:** Revision of the **Visa Code** and **Visa Regulation**



Legal pathways and Talent Mobility

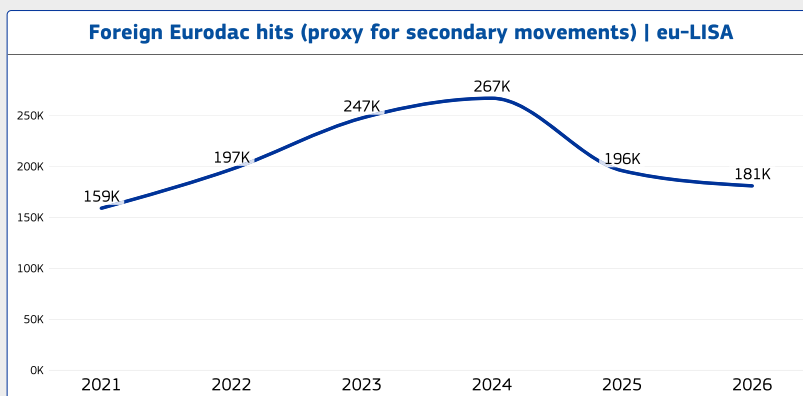
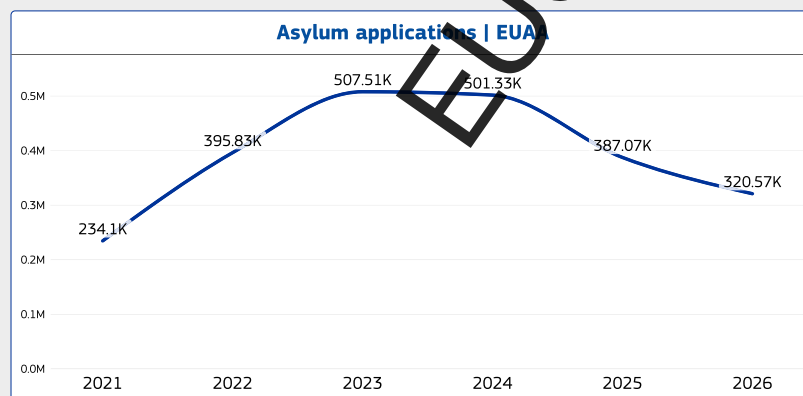
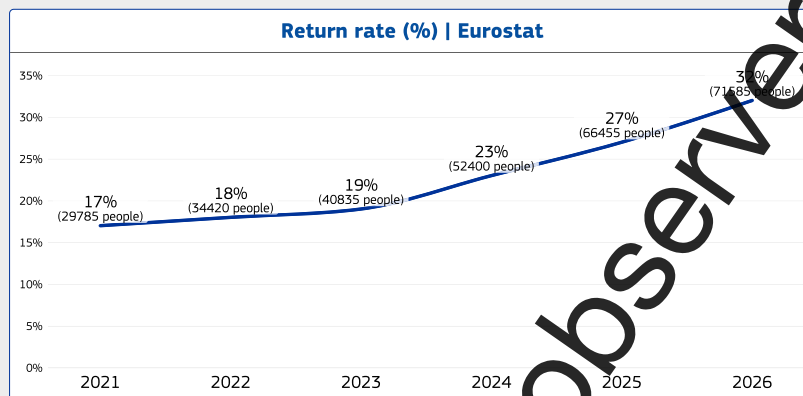
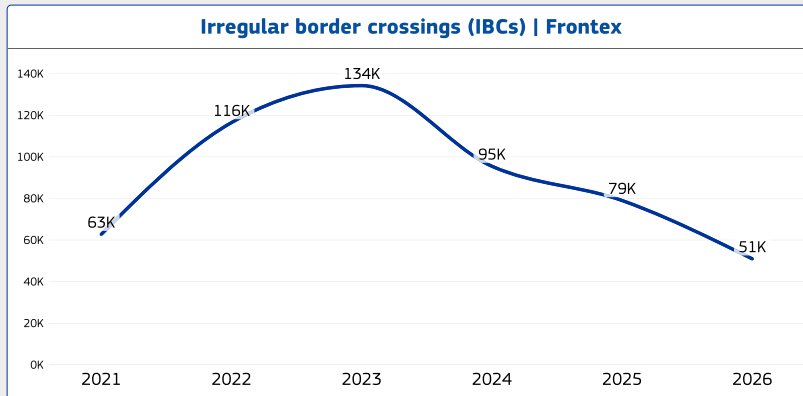
- Talent Partnerships** with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan
- 2022:** **Skills and Talent Package**
- 2023:** **Skills and Talent Mobility Package**
- 2025:** **Choose Europe initiative** to attract and retain global scientific talent
Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Plan for 2026-2027
- 2026:** **EU Talent Pool** Regulation adopted
First Legal Gateway Office pilot with India operational; new Offices under consideration. Mobility cooperation memorandum with India
Recommendation on **attracting talent**
Fair Labour Mobility Package



Protection for Ukrainians in the EU

- 2022:** First activation of the **Temporary Protection Directive**, providing immediate protection and access to rights. Extended until March 2028.
- Solidarity Platform** for Commission, Member States and EU Agencies coordination

Key indicators



Changes between January-June 2022
and January-June 2026*

-56%

**+14%
POINTS**

-19%

-8%

*2022 is used as the baseline to avoid distortions arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL – STATE OF PLAY ON MIGRATION

European Commission, October 2026

Key objectives	Key actions under way and next steps
Implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum	<u>Steps taken since June 2026</u> ➤ First Annual Solidarity Pool: The distribution of the Solidarity Pool for 2026 was formalised at the first Technical-Level Solidarity Forum chaired by the EU Solidarity Coordinator, immediately after the Pact started to fully apply (15 June). Its implementation is progressing; almost one third of all relocations from Cyprus have successfully taken place. Member States are cooperating on the implementation of responsibility offsets and have already earmarked their financial contributions within their national budgets. Technical support and guidance for the practical implementation of relocations, financial contributions and offsets is being provided, with the support of the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA). The second Technical-Level EU Solidarity Forum on 14 September took stock of progress and implementation challenges. Preparations are under way for the second annual migration management cycle. ➤ Commission opened infringement procedures by sending letters of formal notice to 16 Member States for failing to communicate the complete transposition of the Reception Conditions Directive (15 July). <u>Funding:</u> ➤ Allocation of EUR 3 billion is being made available to Member States under AMIF and BMVI for 2025-2027. ➤ Around EUR 1.4 billion from AMIF and BMVI mid-term review (subject to certain conditions) is being allocated to the qualifying Member States' programmes. ➤ Preparations for the operationalisation of the Permanent EU Migration Support Toolbox are ongoing. As part of its financial component, a EUR 250 million Specific Action will support targeted activities for the effective implementation of the Pact. <u>Situational awareness and early warning:</u> ➤ Recent developments in Ceuta and Crete have highlighted the need to improve information sharing, integrated analysis and timely escalation. Work is ongoing to strengthen the capacity to detect unusual migratory patterns at an early stage. <u>Guidance and training:</u> ➤ Commission guidance on detention and the asylum and return border procedures. ➤ EUAA guides on the asylum procedure and on reception models. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Adoption of the Second Annual Migration Management Cycle. ➤ Delegated acts under the AMMR to be adopted by end of 2026. ➤ Ongoing preparatory work for proposal on digitalisation of asylum and migration management in 2027. <u>Strengthening Schengen governance:</u> ➤ The overall state of the Schengen area was discussed at the October Schengen Council. ➤ Schengen evaluations: Periodic evaluation of the application of the Schengen rules by the Netherlands is ongoing. Comprehensive Schengen evaluation reports of Belgium and Germany will be adopted soon.
A deeper and wider Schengen	

EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	➤ Sixth Schengen Senior Officials' meeting in Leuven on 21 October to lay foundations for better monitoring of the progress made in implementing Schengen cycle priorities. ➤ Commission opinions on the temporary reintroduction of internal border control controls if Member States prolong them beyond two years. <u>European digital border management:</u> ➤ European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS): ongoing preparations, launch planned for Q2 2027. ➤ Revised VIS: ongoing work on a proposal to start in two phases (1. Short-stay, 2. Long-Stay and residence permit) to be adopted in Q1 2027. ➤ Interoperability: shared Biometric Matching Service (SBMS), Common Identity Repository (CIR) and European Search Portal (ESP) deployed in 2025/2026. Remaining implementation of interoperability according to the Interoperability roadmap. ➤ Schengen Information System: Entry into operation on 15 October of the new information alert. The alert allows for trusted information received from third countries and international organisations, channelled via Europol, to be entered into SIS, thereby enabling to detect terrorists and persons involved in serious crime that pose a threat to the EU's internal security. ➤ Digitalisation of travel documents: legislative proposals under interinstitutional negotiations. <u>Responding to instrumentalisation of migrants and hybrid threats at the EU's external borders:</u> ➤ BMVI programmes of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were amended to earmark additional funding made available under a Specific Action to enhance their surveillance capabilities at their borders with Russia and Belarus (EE: EUR 19.8 million; FI: EUR 50 million; LV: EUR 1.1 million; LT: EUR 15.4 million; PL: EUR 52 million). Norway's programme, including additional funding under this specific action (EUR 16.43 million), was approved. ➤ BMVI Specific Action call supported Member States for the purchase of uncrewed airborne and seaborne equipment to be put at the disposal of Frontex with EUR 169.6 million, to reinforce their border surveillance capability and foster the deployment of state-of-the-art high-altitude systems. Member States were invited to proceed swiftly with the programme amendment to include the additional funding and start the preparation of the procurement procedures without delay. ➤ BMVI Specific Action call will support Member States with additional border management capabilities, including drones (UAS) and counter drone measures (C-UAS), for EUR 250 million. Applications for over EUR 500 million are being assessed. The Commission decided to add EUR 132.9 million from the Thematic Facility to support funding for selected projects. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Adoption of the recast of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation. ➤ Launch of the evaluation of the European Integrated Border Management Multiannual Strategic policy cycle 2023-2027.
Fighting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings	<u>Ongoing legislative proposals to counter migrant smuggling and combat trafficking in human beings:</u> ➤ Directive on minimum rules to prevent and counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the Union: Council position (13 December 2024). Deliberations in EP's LIBE Committee ongoing. ➤ Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims: adopted on 13 June 2024, it was to be transposed by 15 July 2026; monitoring and enforcement ongoing (20 infringements launched).

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	➤ Regulation on measures against transport operators that facilitate or engage in trafficking in persons or smuggling of migrants: negotiations in the Council currently on hold. EP's position still to be adopted. ➤ Stepping up response – new sanctions' regime presented in July. Negotiations in Council ongoing. The sanctions regime will complement the legal and policy framework with restrictive measures aimed at freezing assets, restricting movement and cutting off profits.
	<u>EU-level cooperation:</u> ➤ Global Alliance Rapid Response Initiative (GARRI): delivers agile and context-specific communication responses to emerging migratory trends, mis- and disinformation and specific patterns in migrant smuggling and trafficking. EU contribution up to EUR 5 million. Planned until February 2029. Testing phase launched and completed in Senegal, will be followed by Egypt, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Activated in Morocco on 11 August and a second phase launched on 21 September, through three targeted digital actions on social media, tailored by region and demographic group, to counter mis- and disinformation that may influence decisions to migrate irregularly, including election-related narratives. ➤ Six new information and awareness-raising campaigns were launched (March-July 2026) to be implemented for the next three years in Albania, Senegal, Türkiye, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, for a total amount of EUR 10.9 million. ➤ European Migration Network (EMN) Working Group on Information Campaigns meeting to be held in Q4 2026. ➤ Regional Immigration Liaison Officers (RILOs) meeting focusing on the Eastern Corridor planned for 21-22 October in Islamabad. ➤ Technical meetings on the digital dimension of migrant smuggling, under the auspices of the EU Internet Forum - First event organised in May 2025, a second in February 2026; third took place on 15 September 2026. ➤ EMPACT Operational Action Plans 2026-2027 - Migration Smuggling and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings launched; covering law enforcement and judicial cooperation within the EU and also with third countries. ➤ Internal Security Fund (ISF) Organised Crime Call: Evaluation of the proposals received ongoing. ➤ 5th meeting of the Focus Group of Specialised Prosecutors against trafficking in human beings convened on 17-18 June. ➤ Focus Group of prosecutors and investigative judges on migrant smuggling to convene at Eurojust on 11-12 November. <u>Working with international partners in the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling:</u> ➤ The Global Alliance is a key component of all bilateral/regional discussions with partner countries on migrant smuggling. ➤ The Joint Declaration, endorsed by 62 partners, including all EU Member States, remains open for further endorsement. It reaffirms the joint determination to strengthen international cooperation and supports deeper engagement on concrete actions and follow-up. ➤ The 2nd Senior Officials Meeting took place in Vienna on 1 July, back-to-back with the UN Working Group on the Smuggling of Migrants (29-30 June). It discussed the Global Alliance Work Plan 2026-2028, with a focus on strengthening international cooperation to address illegal migration via air, based on a whole-of-route approach. ➤ Task Force (created in April 2026) to promote a work strand on irregular migration by air in the context of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and explore further action with UN and international partners.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	➤ International cooperation advances, notably within the G7. ➤ <u>Engagement with partners:</u> ➤ Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships (ASOPs), including COPs, with Morocco, Tunisia and Western Balkan partners underway (implementation of ASOP with Niger currently on hold). ➤ Common Operational Partnership projects (COPs), supporting joint investigations on migrant smuggling, are underway with Mauritania, The Gambia, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Nigeria, as well as Pakistan, Western Balkans and Türkiye. ➤ West Africa regional initiative: EUR 201 million individual measure adopted in December 2024. ➤ East Africa regional initiatives include: ○ ROCK (Regional Operational Centre in support of the Khartoum process and the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative): EUR 6 million for the 3rd phase. ○ Better Migration Management programme in Eastern and Horn of Africa: EUR 17.5 million EU contribution for its 4th phase. ➤ North Africa: ○ Anti-smuggling project (EUR 18 million) to support Tunisia to fight smuggling and support victims of trafficking; a project with UNDP to develop a code of conduct for the Coast Guard (EUR 7 million; contracted in 2025). ○ EUR 30 million anti-smuggling support project in Egypt (PACSOM). ○ EUR 15 million anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking project for Morocco started in February. ○ EUR 25 million border management project in Libya started in January. ○ EUR 3 million anti-smuggling project is under negotiation with UNODC for Algeria. ○ EUR 5 million regional programme HIMAY to enhance international police cooperation against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in North Africa (implemented by Interpol since January 2024). ○ EUR 6.5 million regional EU4BorderSecurity project to strengthen Frontex engagement and dialogue in the MENA region, started in December 2025. ○ Frontex to negotiate a Working Arrangement with Egyptian border management authorities. ➤ Western Balkans: ○ Regional project EU4FAST to reinforce partners' capacities (EUR 36 million EU contribution for 2024-2027) to strengthen the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. ➤ Asia: ○ PROTECT programme (EUR 16 million), implemented by ICMPD and UNODC, operating in the five Central Asian Republics and Pakistan. ○ South Asia programme (EUR 9 million), implemented by UNODC, operating in Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives. ○ The Management Board authorised Frontex to negotiate a Working Arrangement with the Bangladeshi authorities. ➤ At global level:
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EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	○ EU-funded programme PACTS with UNODC. ○ Global Action against the financial and digital-based dimensions of migrant smuggling (EUR 15 million), with UNODC. <u>Preventing exploitation of workers with an irregular status in Europe:</u> ➤ Employers Sanctions Directive: evaluation of the Directive ongoing. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Progress towards adoption of key legislative proposals. ➤ Finalisation of the Work Plan for 2026-2028 on the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling along its three pillars focusing on: strengthening legal framework and capacity of partner countries, digital smuggling, follow-the-money and irregular migration by air. ➤ EU financial support for new projects (in total EUR 12 million from the ISF): four new actions covering cooperation with the Western Balkans, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Moldova. ➤ Immigration Liaison Officers' (ILO) Regulation: adoption of implementation report. ➤ 6th Commission report on progress made in the EU in combating trafficking in human beings, and a new EU strategy on combating trafficking in human beings.
New common approach on the return of irregular migrants	<u>Legislative framework on returns:</u> ➤ New common approach on returns: to enter into force in October, after signature and publication. ➤ Digitalisation of case management in the area of return, readmission and reintegration: upcoming proposal. <u>Operational measures:</u> ➤ Return Contact Group (5 October): return border procedure and preparation for the implementation of the Return Regulation, including the European Return Order (ERO). ➤ Increased Frontex capacity to support Member States on returns and Member States' uptake. Over 49 000 returns supported this year so far. Extensive use of Frontex support for return counselling, training, return specialists and returns by air (charter and scheduled flights). ➤ Operational work to improve return processes led by the EU Return Coordinator. The new return roadmap sets out the targeted return actions for 2026–2027. ➤ High Level Network for Returns meeting chaired by the EU Return Coordinator on 13–14 October. ➤ Online workshop on improving the efficiency of the return of third-country nationals posing a security threat on 2 October. ➤ Letters on the return border procedure shared with third countries; ongoing communication efforts. ➤ EUR 13 million (IPA-funded) regional Western Balkans Joint action on return management being implemented. Technical consultations on the partners' national return roadmaps were concluded. First roadmaps expected soon. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Once the Return Regulation enters into force, a dedicated committee will be set up to establish the European Return Order (ERO) within 6 months, as an implementing act.

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	➤ Continue close coordination with Member States on actions for the return border procedure implementation. ➤ Taskforce meeting on return data on 12 November.
Strengthening our readmission policies	Readmission requirements in other instruments: ➤ Renewed Regulation on the generalised system of preferences (GSP) (to apply from 2027) includes the lack of cooperation on readmission as one of the grounds for withdrawal of trade preferences, as proposed by the Commission. ➤ The Commission MFF proposal for a Regulation establishing Global Europe includes the possibility to suspend payments or programme implementation in case of serious shortcomings in readmission cooperation. ➤ The Samoa Agreement includes detailed obligations on return and readmission, covering countries where there is no readmission instrument with the EU in place. ➤ 7th Visa Code Article 25a report, covering cooperation on readmission in 2025, was adopted on 23 July. Follow-up work with third countries continues. ➤ Proposals for Council Decisions on the signing and conclusion of an EU Readmission Agreement with Nigeria were adopted. The text was presented on 9 September at the JHA Counsellors meeting. NEXT STEPS: ➤ Strengthening of Article 25a mechanism planned in the recast of the Visa Code (Q1 2027). ➤ Preparation of the proposals for Council Decisions on the signing and conclusion of an EU Readmission agreement (EURA) with Kazakhstan, in parallel with Visa Facilitation Agreement (VFA).
Visa policy	➤ Visa ban for those serving or having served in the Russian armed forces proposed as part of the 21st sanctions package (adopted on 23 July). EU Visa Policy Strategy: ➤ Implementation ongoing. Discussions with Member States on the different proposals, including the new visa exemption framework, to be used with the 5 visa-required GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia). Visa Suspension Mechanism: ➤ Preparations ongoing for the 9th Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism (expected in December). Visa liberalisation dialogue: ➤ Work on the visa liberalisation process is ongoing with Armenia. ➤ Temporary suspension of the visa exemption for Georgian holders of diplomatic, service and official passports (adopted on 6 March, with guidelines to Member States). NEXT STEPS: ➤ Adoption of legislative proposals to implement measures included in the Visa Strategy (early 2027). ➤ Update of the 2022 Commission Guidelines on visa issuance and of the list of supporting documents to be presented by Russian applicants. ➤ Armenia: EU evaluation missions with Member States experts to prepare the 2nd Commission Progress Report on the implementation by Armenia of the visa liberalisation action plan.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	➤ Georgia: Suspension of the visa exemption to be revisited after one year (<i>i.e.</i> March 2027), to be either lifted or prolonged for another two years.
Legal pathways and integration	<u>Talent Partnerships:</u> ➤ Ongoing scaling-up of five ongoing Talent Partnership with Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh and Pakistan. <u>Union of Skills:</u> ➤ The implementation of the first pilot European Legal Gateway Office in India (launched on 18 February) started. The First Advisory Board meeting took place on 15 June. ➤ Talent for Innovation Attraction Platform (launched in March) brings together Member States' experts on migration, innovation, education and research. ➤ EU funding to Member States for consular capacity for talent attraction and innovation, and support to Talent Partnerships. <u>Legislative and enforcement steps:</u> ➤ Upcoming European Research Area (ERA) package will aim to increase the EU attractiveness to non-EU researchers selected to participate in Union-funded programmes. ➤ Monitoring of the implementation of the Commission Recommendation on Attracting Talent for Innovation through the Talent for Innovation Attraction Platform. ➤ EU Talent Pool Regulation entered into force on 1 June: ongoing development of the IT tool for its operationalisation. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Vocational Education and Training (VET) Strategy, including an international dimension and attraction of talent. ➤ European Legal Gateway Office in India: operationalisation continues, including outreach to stakeholders in Europe and in India. 2nd Advisory Board to take place in November.
UKRAINE	➤ The Council Implementing Decision extending temporary protection until March 2028 was adopted on 30 July. <u>NEXT STEPS:</u> ➤ Guidelines for the implementation of the Council Decision to be adopted in late October.
Strategic relations on migration with non-EU countries, especially countries of origin and transit	<u>MIGRATION ROUTES TOWARDS THE EU</u> ➤ Strengthening migration cooperation with EU Southern Neighbourhood Partners under the Pact for the Mediterranean. ➤ Under the Eastern Corridor initiative, continue fostering route-based cooperation with key countries along the Eastern Corridor, stretching from South Asia to North Africa, notably Libya, and onwards to Europe. CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN <u>Regional actions:</u> ➤ Ongoing implementation of programmes: “Support on migration to North Africa” (EUR 675 million for 2025-2027); “Regional Development and Protection Programme in North Africa”: Phase 7 (EUR 50.1 million for 2025-2027) in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	➤ Assisted voluntary returns (AVR) from North African and Sahel countries to countries of origin intensified significantly through EU-funded operations: ○ AVR from North Africa and Sub-Saharan countries (mostly from the Sahel) to countries of origin: nearly 160 000 returns between December 2022 and June 2026, including over 56 600 in 2025 (over 35 800 from North Africa and 20 800 from Sub-Saharan Africa). In 2026, over 28 000 returns. ○ Alongside facilitating returns, the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme in North Africa (NDICI) has provided protection and direct assistance to over 57 000 migrants since early 2023 across North Africa. An additional EUR 57 million top-up was signed in November 2025 (including co-funding by Sweden), and a further top-up is expected to support the extension of activities to December. ○ Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration programme in Sub-Saharan Africa (NDICI) provided assistance for voluntary return from transit Sub-Saharan countries to over 65 500 migrants, and individual reintegration assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa to over 136 200 returning migrants (September 2022 - June 2026). ➤ Tunisia: key steps ➤ Ongoing implementation of all pillars of the Comprehensive Partnership, including on migration. ➤ Ongoing implementation of EUR 100 million to support Tunisia in the areas of protection, assisted voluntary returns, border management and migrant smuggling. ➤ The decision by Tunisia to suspend UNHCR refugee registrations since June 2024 continues to be raised with the government. Cooperation with UNHCR on protection of already registered asylum seekers and refugees continues, although the number of persons concerned has drastically decreased. Limited positive development around rescue-at-sea coordination between Tunisian authorities and UNHCR. ➤ IOM facilitated voluntary return to their country of origin of over 8 850 migrants in 2025 and over 4 960 in 2026 (as of July). ➤ Progress on legal migration/Talent Partnership continues. ➤ Next steps: ○ Continue supporting partners to assist and protect people on the move, while supporting Tunisia in its transition towards a state-owned asylum system based on international obligations and protection safeguards. ➤ Egypt: key steps ➤ Implementation continues on all pillars of the Joint Declaration on the EU-Egypt Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership of 17 March 2024, including migration and mobility (EUR 200 million grant under NDICI until 2027). Approximately EUR 32 million were contracted in 2025. Additional support will be provided later this year, with a large focus on border management/search and rescue and protection. ➤ Continued implementation of the NDICI-funded programme for Strengthening Protection and Resilience of Refugees, Asylum seekers and Migrants in a Vulnerable Situation in Egypt, including support to host communities (EUR 37 million). This includes targeted support to Sudanese refugees in Egypt, as well as EUR 21.2 million of EU funding in support to the Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt. ➤ Humanitarian assistance for refugees in Egypt allocated for 2026 (EUR 8 million total budget).
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EUROPEAN COUNCIL – OCTOBER 2026 – MIGRATION STATE OF PLAY

	➤ EUR 110 million project on border management and search and rescue at sea and land borders is underway. ➤ EUR 30 million project on anti-smuggling is underway (PACSOM), implemented by UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), in partnership with CIVIPOL (France). ➤ Ongoing implementation of the working arrangements with Europol and Eurojust (signed in April 2025). ➤ Progress on legal migration/Talent Partnership. Work is ongoing to enhance the European offer around talent mobility, including through the establishment of a future Legal Gateway office in Egypt, building on the EU-Egypt Talent Partnership and existing EU and Member State initiatives. ➤ Ongoing engagement at technical level on migration management, including returns, readmission and reintegration, and on the new Egyptian transit visa obligation for Bangladeshi nationals travelling via Egypt to Libya and possibly onwards to the EU (enforcement still pending; various options being explored to support this enforcement). ➤ Next steps: ○ Continued discussions on actions to be funded under the 2025-2027 envelope for migration, and their timely contracting. ○ Readmission workshop: third workshop to be held in Cairo (November 2026). ○ Working Arrangements with Europol ready for signature. ○ Frontex Management Board approved the Agency's proposal to prioritise the southern neighbourhood for the deployment of a Liaison Officer, and authorised Frontex to negotiate a Working Arrangement with the Egyptian authorities. ○ Senior Officials Meeting on Migration in January 2027, in Cairo).
	<u>Libya: key steps</u> ➤ The SIBMMIL programme (Support to Integrated Border and migration management in Libya) ended its operations in December 2025. A EUR 25 million Border management project (IOM and Italy as implementing partners) aims to strengthen the management of land borders and migratory routes, investigate and dismantle transnational smuggling and trafficking networks, assist Libyan communities affected by migration, and reinforce our long-standing cooperation to enhance the capacity, effectiveness and accountability of Libya's maritime authorities in saving lives at sea. An expansion of the activities to the eastern regions of Libya is under negotiation in the framework of the technical dialogue. ➤ Continuation of support to key protection programmes implemented by international NGOs and UN agencies on the ground (EUR 37.5 million, with additional EUR 53 million to be contracted in 2026). ➤ EUR 2 million allocated for humanitarian aid to refugees in Libya. ➤ Since the EU has increased its engagement and dialogue with Libya on migration in 2024, Libya has taken steps that included lifting the cost of exit visas for voluntary humanitarian returns, improving protection, notably of Sudanese refugees, and a fully operationalised the EU-funded Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Tripoli (MRCC). Since October 2025, the Libyan authorities have a national voluntary return mechanism for migrants, which works in parallel with the IOM voluntary humanitarian return mechanism. The EU continues to fund IOM activities, while working in parallel to strengthen the national voluntary return system, in line with international standards. ➤ Libya has initiated their participation in anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking activities under EMPACT. ➤ Ongoing technical dialogue that informs our programming exercise and cooperation activities.

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	➤ Next steps: ○ Monitoring of the situation in the country and the situation of migrants and refugees, including the Sudanese refugees. ○ Follow-up on the establishment of the MRCC Benghazi by Operation IRINI with EPF funding. ○ Maintain coherence in the engagement in Libya, including support to the eastern regions, on border management and migrant smuggling. Explore possible EUBAM engagement and possible bilateral border-management support by Member States in the eastern regions of Libya. ○ Continue supporting durable solutions for migrants, including IOM-assisted voluntary humanitarian returns; monitor the new national return mechanism and ensure support, if human rights are respected; continued advocacy for more pledges by EU Member States and international partners for resettlement from the Emergency Transit Centre in Rwanda. ○ Continuation of the technical dialogue with the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity and with the authorities in the eastern regions, ensuring that follow-up reflects the broader operational agenda with Libya. <u>Countries of origin</u> Bangladesh: ➤ Continuous cooperation on all strands of migration, in the framework of the EU-Bangladesh Migration and Mobility Dialogue. ➤ Continuous engagement on further improving the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for return of irregular migrants, in particular delays in identification, with a view to the return border procedure. ➤ Continuous engagement on the Talent Partnership. ➤ Continuous engagement on the prevention of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in the framework of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and in the framework of the Eastern Corridor initiative. ➤ Continuous cooperation on border management and document security, including via EU-funded IBM project. ➤ Next steps: ○ Finalisation of the joint roadmap to counter irregular migration. ○ Follow-up technical meeting on skills recognition and digital employment platforms. ○ Supporting increased cooperation with Frontex in view of the Agency's mandate to negotiate a Working Arrangement. Pakistan: ➤ Continuous cooperation on all strands of migration, in the framework of the EU-Pakistan Migration and Mobility Dialogue. ➤ Further engagement on improving the implementation of the EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement with a view to the return border procedure. ➤ Engagement on the Talent Partnership. ➤ Continuous engagement on the prevention of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human being in the framework of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and in the framework of the Eastern Corridor initiative. ➤ Cooperation on border management and document security, including via EU-funded IBM project. ➤ Next steps: ○ ILO meeting focusing on the 'Eastern Corridor' to take place in Islamabad on 21-22 October.
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	○ Supporting increased cooperation with Frontex in view of the negotiations of a Working Arrangement.
	Sudan: ➤ EU continues assisting extremely vulnerable Sudanese populations that have been displaced due to the conflict in Sudan, both within the country and in the wider region. ➤ Since 2021, EUR 316 million of development cooperation supports vulnerable populations within Sudan. An additional EUR 60 million has been mobilised to support the Sudan regional crisis. ➤ Within Chad, in total over EUR 100 million has been mobilised to support Sudanese refugees and their host communities. ➤ The EU provides humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Sudanese populations: in 2025 only, EUR 160 million were allocated for humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable within Sudan, and EUR 109 million for the humanitarian response to the Sudan crisis in neighbouring countries (of which EUR 77.85 million in Chad). ➤ In addition, EUR 13 million support stabilisation assistance, as well as EUR 30 million for assistance and solutions for the forcibly displaced populations in Sudan.
	WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND ATLANTIC ROUTE Algeria: key steps ➤ In 2025, over 9 600 assisted voluntary returns from Algeria were supported via IOM, and over 7 350 this year until June. ➤ The 8th EU-Algeria informal dialogue on migration and mobility took place on 14 July. Follow-up is ongoing. ➤ Additional funding (EUR 2 million) for protection is secured for 2026-2028 for Algeria under the UNHCR regional programme for North Africa, while negotiations with ENODC for a new anti-smuggling project (EUR 3 million) are ongoing. ➤ Humanitarian aid to Sahrawi refugee population in Algeria continues this year (EUR 9 million). Morocco: key steps ➤ EUR 152 million of budget support supported results in border management and anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking, as well as integration of migrants. Overall, EUR 425 million provided to Morocco across all areas on migration. ➤ Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnership ongoing. Anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking programme contracted (EUR 15 million signed in 2025). ➤ Following the Frontex-Morocco <i>Comité Mixte</i> of 11 June, a draft Working Arrangement was shared with Moroccan authorities in July. ➤ Progress on legal migration/Talent Partnership. Next steps: ○ Discussions on a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership. ○ Budget support to the implementation of the Moroccan "<i>Stratégie nationale d'immigration et d'asile</i>" (SNIA) (EUR 160 million, NDICI) is under negotiation with Morocco. ○ New cycle of subcommittees, including on migration (tentatively planned for November). Talent Partnership roundtable.

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Mauritania: key steps

- Ongoing implementation of the EU Migration Partnership with Mauritania launched in March 2024.
- All components of the EUR 210 million package, including EUR 100 million budget support, are being implemented. Ongoing support for border surveillance (including a EUR 25 million project on maritime border management), fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, support to migrants rescued at sea, support for Malian refugees hosted in the country (including a EUR 38 million protection programme at the border with Mali), protection of migrants.
- Negotiations on a working arrangement between Frontex and Mauritanian authorities are on hold but are expected to restart following a Mauritanian mission to Warsaw.
- NDICI-Global Europe supports two temporary migrant reception centres, managed by the Mauritanian authorities, in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, with the objective to support people rescued at sea, provide different forms of assistance and conduct screenings to identify their possible vulnerabilities, determine their legal status and offer assistance and protection accordingly. So far, over 3 000 migrants have been hosted and screened in the two reception centres.
- A new package of EUR 551 million, to be funded under the Flexible Mechanism, will include support to protection and durable solutions for displaced populations and host communities, the consolidation of reception, protection and documentation capacities for migrants and asylum seekers.
- Frontex Liaison Officer post in Mauritania temporarily being covered by the Frontex Liaison Officer in Rabat.
- **Next steps:**
 - Dialogue on migration tentatively planned for January 2027.
 - Re-starting negotiations on a working arrangement between Frontex and Mauritanian border management authorities.

Senegal: key steps

- Ongoing discussion on a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership based on three pillars, including migration and mobility.
- Ongoing regular technical dialogue on return and readmission cooperation, following the Commission's proposal for restrictive visa measures in 2022.
- Ongoing support on prevention measures and border management (including EUR 30 million from the Flexible Mechanism). Vessels for the control of irregular sea departures were delivered in March. An information campaign against irregular departures was launched in September.
- A new package of EUR 51 million, to be funded under the Flexible Mechanism, will include support to the capacity building of four Senegalese entities to combat irregular migration and the smuggling of migrants.
- Negotiations on a working arrangement between Frontex and Senegalese authorities are ongoing.
- Liaison Officer with a regional mandate post temporarily being covered from Frontex headquarters in Warsaw.
- European Migration Liaison Officer post has been published (previous mandate ended).
- **Next steps:**
 - Regular engagement on countering illegal migration.
 - Continue discussions on a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership, while its signature is conditional on improvements on return and readmission. Close monitoring of cooperation on return and readmission continues.

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- Concluding negotiations on a working arrangement between the Senegalese authorities and Frontex.

The Gambia: key steps

- Ongoing implementation of EUR 15 million projects on fighting migrant smuggling, reintegration of returnees, protection of disembarked migrants and mobility.
- Ongoing work on return and readmission.
- Technical mission to The Gambia in June yielded positive results with the request for an updated needs assessment focusing on border management, support to centres at disembarkation points and cross border cooperation with Senegal.
- **Next steps:**
 - Concluding negotiations on a working arrangement between The Gambian authorities and Frontex.
 - Updated needs assessment on border management.
 - Updates on disembarkation needs by the Red Cross.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Türkiye: key steps

- Engagement with Türkiye continues on all matters regarding migration. The Commission is advocating for a full and effective implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and the EU-Turkey readmission agreement towards all EU Member States.
- Ongoing implementation of the 2024 EUR 1.15 billion package for refugee assistance and migration management support.
- Ongoing contracting of the 2025 EUR 1.15 billion multiannual package on refugee assistance and related support for 2025-2027. It includes a EUR 161 million top-up to the 'support to Türkiye's Efforts to Strengthen Border Management at the Eastern and Southeastern Border' project. It will establish a modernised border surveillance system with border control equipment, aligned with confirmed needs on Türkiye's eastern, southern and south-eastern borders. It includes EUR 150 million for 'Enhancing protection response for sustainable voluntary returns to Syria', with a cash assistance component.
- Ongoing engagement on counter-smuggling with Türkiye, including through reinigorated cooperation between Türkiye and the EU Agencies (Europol and Frontex), Türkiye's participation in the Global Alliance and the Eastern Corridor Initiative, as well as collaboration with Turkish authorities and Turkish air carriers to address the abuse of commercial means of transport to facilitate irregular migration to the EU.

➤ **Next steps:**

- Assessing and negotiating the Turkish authorities' project proposals for the remaining EUR 195 million for refugee support and migration management under the 2025-2027 envelope.
- Engagement of Türkiye in the EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling for 2026-2027.
- EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Security in Q1 2027 and continued engagement at senior official level, including with EU Agencies (Frontex, Europol).

Syria: key steps

- EU mobilised EUR 175 million in 2025 to support a peaceful and inclusive political transition and sustainable socio-economic recovery in addition to a humanitarian aid allocation of EUR 204 million. An ongoing EUR 31.5 million programme supports

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	local initiatives in areas with high numbers of persons going back or great potential for return movements (internally displaced persons or refugees in neighbouring countries). A a EUR 12.5 million programme addresses housing, land and property rights, as well as civil documentation and legal aid. ➤ EUR 280 million for 2026-2027 adopted in July will support stabilisation, inclusive transition and socio-economic development in Syria. ➤ This comes in addition to the 2026 Humanitarian Implementation Plan allocation of EUR 210 million, which is providing lifesaving and life sustaining emergency and early recovery assistance to the most vulnerable Syrians, including returnees and internally displaced people, covering basic needs and services. ➤ On top of these, the EUR 80 million cross-border programme on durable solutions for refugees from Syria is implemented in Lebanon (EUR 40 million) and Syria (EUR 40 million). In Syria, the programme supports durable solutions for returnees, improving conditions for sustainable return, resilience building and technical assistance on managing returns. ➤ Coordination on returns of persons without the right to stay in the EU to Syria continues in the High-Level Network for Returns. The AMIF Specific Action ‘Incentivising assisted voluntary returns for Member States under pressure’ can be used for voluntary returns to Syria. ➤ Frontex voluntary return operations in Syria started on 20 March 2025. In 2026 so far, over 6 700 individuals returned to Syria with the assistance of Frontex. In July 2025, Frontex also made available reintegration measures to those returning voluntarily to Syria, by expanding the geographical scope of the EU Reintegration Programme (EURP). ➤ Member States could make use of the question and answers on voluntary ‘go-and-see visits’ as appropriate, taking into account existing national practices and available resources, within the limits of EU law. ➤ The 1st EU-Syria High Level Political Dialogue (HLPD) also discussed the strengthening of the coordination on migration. ➤ Next steps: ○ Building on the results of the High-Level Political Dialogue, the next Syrian Partnership Coordination Forum will take place, for the first time, in Damascus on 20 November, with a focus on investment and the private sector, to deepen cooperation and help Syria on its path towards socio-economic recovery and reconstruction. ○ Expand direct communication channels between Brussels and Damascus to support cooperation on return and readmission. ○ Explore ways to build capacity in Syria to handle returns, including identification, issuance of travel documents, receiving returnees upon arrival and reintegration, and possible synergies between socio-economic development and reintegration. ○ Undertake further EU-coordinated outreach to the Syrian authorities on readmission. ○ Explore the possibility of developing a structured EU-Syria platform covering all relevant aspects of migration (including also migrant smuggling and border management, in addition to readmission from the EU and the regional movements), which would feed into the overall framework of building EU relations with Syria. ➤ <u>Lebanon: key steps</u> ➤ The EU-Lebanon Association Council held in 2025 marked a new page in EU-Lebanon relations. The dialogue continues. ➤ The implementation of the EUR 1 billion financial package for the stabilisation of Lebanon for 2024-2027 continues.
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	➤ Implementation and contracting is ongoing for its first half: EUR 500 million adopted in August 2024 to provide essential assistance to Lebanon's governance reform, economic stability and access to basic services for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees. Under this broader package, the EU provides EUR 63 million in support of Lebanon's internal security (including anti-smuggling, cybersecurity, counterterrorism) and land and sea border security. The package also includes EUR 388 million to support Lebanon's efforts in addressing the needs of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees from Syria. ➤ In July, the EU adopted the second half of the EUR 1 billion package, amounting to EUR 505 million for 2026-2027 in support of reforms, recovery and stability of Lebanon. Out of these, EUR 373 million will support vulnerable Lebanese and refugees from Syria and durable solutions for refugees in Lebanon. ➤ A EUR 110 million humanitarian aid package for 2026 is delivering needs-based emergency health care, basic assistance, protection services, shelter, disaster preparedness and education for children out of school to all vulnerable populations, including refugees, vulnerable Lebanese, internally displaced people and other people on the move. ➤ Frontex is negotiating a working arrangement with the Lebanese authorities. ➤ Next steps: ○ Europol has a mandate to launch a working arrangement with the Lebanese authorities.
	<u>Jordan: key steps</u> ➤ The EU-Jordan Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership of January 2025 includes a pillar on migration, protection and support to refugees. ➤ On 8 January, the EU and Jordan held their first Leaders' Summit in Amman. ➤ The EU has long supported Integrated Border Management in Jordan. The bilateral programme for 2025-2027 includes EUR 25 million to support Jordan's integrated border management and enhance internal security. ➤ EUR 80 million Special Measure (adopted in September 2027) provides social assistance and services to Syrian refugees, and to contribute to sustainable skills development, with a view to expand access to durable solutions, including voluntary returns. ➤ In July, the EU adopted EUR 160 million Special Measure for 2026-2027, to sustain the protection support of durable solutions for Syrian refugees in Jordan, including the reintegration of returnees in Syria in a dignified and sustainable manner. ➤ The 2026 Humanitarian Implementation Plan allocation of EUR 15.5 million for Jordan focuses on the critical protection and health needs of the most vulnerable refugees, both in camps and host communities. ➤ Jordan signed a Working arrangement with Europol in July 2025. ➤ Frontex is negotiating a working arrangement with the Jordanian authorities. ➤ Next steps: ○ 16th Meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council to take place in 2027.

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	<u>Iraq: key steps</u> ➤ The 4th EU-Iraq Cooperation Council (19 October 2025) confirmed close cooperation on migration, including on protection and forced displacement, migration governance and management, countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration. ➤ EUR 30 million Special Measure (adopted in December 2025) aims to mitigate and manage irregular migration. ➤ EUR 60 million for 2026-2027 adopted in July to support migration management and address root causes. ➤ EUR 2.4 million (contract signed in August 2025) to strengthen Iraq's national legal and institutional capacity to register, process and issue civil documentation for internally displaced people and returnees. ➤ EUR 5 million (contract signed in November 2025) to improve Iraq's efforts to prevent and address trafficking and smuggling. ➤ Next steps: ○ Ongoing work on the practical arrangements on readmission cooperation with Iraq. <u>Afghanistan: key steps</u> ➤ Ongoing Frontex support for voluntary returns and reintegration assistance through the EU Reintegration Programme. ➤ Extensive engagement with Member States in Council formations and in the High-Level Network for Returns. Ongoing discussions on ensuring appropriate consular services and issuance of travel documents for potential returnees. ➤ The Commission continues supporting vulnerable populations in and from Afghanistan, including internally displaced people, returnees on its territory, host communities and refugees hosted in neighbouring countries, such as Iran and Pakistan. ➤ The Commission and 13 Member States cooperate in a regional Team Europe Initiative on Afghan displacement. ➤ The Commission and EU+ countries cooperate in the context of the EUAA Expert Platform on Safe Pathways for Afghans. ➤ EU presence in Kabul has been ensured, and the EU Delegation has both hosted and supported Member States on the ground, including through enhanced coordination and outreach to the <i>de facto</i> authorities. ➤ Next steps: ○ Technical-level work and coordination efforts by the Commission. ○ Adoption in 2026 of actions on basic needs and livelihoods in Afghanistan (EUR 80 million) and on supporting displaced Afghans in the region and sustainable reintegration of returnees and displaced people in Afghanistan (EUR 25 million). WESTERN BALKANS <u>Regional actions: key steps</u> ➤ Strengthened presence of EU Agencies: ○ Frontex: Status Agreements deployments in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (applied provisionally). Standing Corps deployment also in Kosovo* on the basis of a working arrangement. Status Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina signed on 11 June 2025 (not yet ratified by Bosnia and Herzegovina). Deployments in the Western Balkans amount to approximately 550 standing corps officers. ○ EUAA: bilateral roadmaps on asylum and reception with Western Balkan partners being renewed.

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	○ Europol: operational cooperation continuously strengthened. ➤ EUR 350 million of migration governance and management funding committed under IPA III 2021-2024. ➤ Readmission: Regular Readmission Committees under the readmission agreements. ➤ Returns: Regional Workshop on cooperation on return systems in Sarajevo on 1-2 October. ➤ Continuous progress towards alignment with the EU <i>acquis</i> on legal and illegal migration, asylum and border management. ➤ At the end of 2025, Denmark added EUR 9.4 million to the regional project EU4FAST, to reinforce partners' capacities to counter migrant smuggling (EUR 36 million EU contribution for 2024-2027, increased to EUR 45.5 until 2028). ➤ Visa alignment: ○ Most partners still have visa-free regimes with third countries including Türkiye (all), China, Russia and Belarus. ○ Starting 31 October, Montenegro will be fully aligned with the EU visa policy. ○ Albania adopted a visa policy alignment roadmap in November 2025, with concrete commitments and envisaged deadlines to terminate all misaligned visa-free regimes. In March, Albania removed Indonesia, Oman and Thailand from the list of countries benefiting from a seasonal visa-waiver. ○ With the exception of Turkey, North Macedonia maintains full visa alignment with the EU. ○ Bosnia and Herzegovina maintains seven permanent visa-free agreements with third countries requiring visa for the EU, and reinstated and extended seasonal visa exemptions for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman nationals from 30 to 60 days. ➤ Discussions ongoing with Serbia on the issue of Russian nationals acquiring visa-free travel rights to the EU after being granted Serbian citizenship, which poses potential security risks for the EU. The EU has requested that the procedure is withdrawn altogether, but Serbia is proposing reinforced safeguards of the procedure. ➤ Next steps: ○ Continue advocacy on visa alignment. ○ Continue engagement in EMPACT Operational Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling for 2026-2027. ○ Continue work on contingency planning and crisis preparedness. ○ Technical meetings to develop roadmaps for returns. ○ EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs (Montenegro, 5-6 November).
	CHANNEL ROUTE ➤ The Commission published an EU Action Plan for the Channel route on 16 June. The Action Plan aims to address the migratory route of the Channel in a comprehensive manner and identifies operational measures to address the current challenges along the route. The Action Plan focuses on three main priority areas, to be tackled with support from EU Agencies and in cooperation with the UK: reinforcing migration diplomacy along the route, disrupting smuggling networks and their criminal infrastructure, and strengthening border management. Work on its implementation is ongoing.