

MIGRATIONS IN EUROPE

The new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum



Yes, we are proposing a mandatory solidarity mechanism, because each EU Member State should take part in solving the migration problem depending on its size and strength.

**YLVA
JOHANSSON**



According to a Eurostat survey, 72 percent of EU citizens want the EU to become involved in developing a new framework for asylum and migration policy. The experiences of 2015-16 shocked Europe. Therefore, in September 2020, the European Commission presented a draft pact on migration and asylum. Now, extensive political and social consultations are taking place on this matter. As part of this process, an online debate was held by the European Commission Representation in Poland in cooperation with the Centre for International Relations (CIR - CSM).



The migration policy in the European Union was discussed by:

Ylva Johansson - EU Commissioner for internal affairs, **Christine Goyer** - representative of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Poland, **Mariusz Boguszewski** - director of the Department of International Affairs of the Ministry of Interior and Administration, **Małgorzata Pacek** - lecturer at the European Center of the University of Warsaw and former consul of the Republic of Poland, and **Rev. Prof. Janusz Balicki** - head of the Interinstitutional Department of Migration Research at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The discussion was moderated by **Małgorzata Bonikowska**, President of CIR - CSM.

Below we present the main topics and conclusions of this debate.

NOT EVERY MIGRATION IS A PROBLEM

Annually, around 3 million people legally immigrate to the EU and obtain the right of residency. Most of them start families with EU citizens. Over a million come for work and research. At the same time, about 1-1.5 million people leave Europe every year for the same reasons: family, work, study, and research. This means that the EU population grows by 2 million every year.

Due to the aging of European societies, the Union needs these young people. Therefore 600,000-700,000 of them are granted EU citizenship every year. In 2015, as a result of the Arab Spring, and the war in Syria, the number of irregular migrations to the European Union suddenly increased by more than 10 times. About 2 million newcomers came to the EU countries. It was a shock, which resulted in serious political and social consequences.

Since 2017, the number has definitely decreased. In 2019, 140,000 irregular immigrants crossed the EU borders, and again 2020 saw a similar number. The European Union, however, has not yet resolved the issues resulting from the aftermath of the 2015-2016 migration crisis.



I dare not agree that this solidarity does not exist (...). What is not there is consent for mandatory relocation based on an automatic key.

**MARIUSZ
BOGUSZEWSKI**





THE MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PACT

The new EU Pact aims to regulate four problem areas where there have been no clear rules so far:

- Significant reduction of irregular migration to the EU by both land and sea. The aim is to seal the EU's external borders (including by combating smuggling or cooperation between border guards of neighbouring countries) and prevent fatal accidents (800 people drowned in the Mediterranean in the first 5 months of 2021).
- More efficient and faster asylum procedures for asylum-seekers, including unaccompanied children.
- Rapid verification of irregular migrants and arrangements for their return to their home countries if not granted asylum. Statistics show that about 1/3 are refugees and 2/3 are economic migrants. Every year, about half a million people are refused a residence permit in the EU, but only 1/3 of them actually return to their countries either because of the lack of readmission agreements or the reluctance of the countries of origin to re-admit them.
- Introduction of a solidarity mechanism between the EU Member States, based on flexibility. Each country would take part in solving the problem of migrants. However, the form of involvement would be varied (flexibility): from receiving a certain number of newcomers into its territory and integrating them with the local community to taking organizational and financial responsibility for returning people who were denied the right to stay in the EU to their country of origin.



There is no voluntary solidarity. If we create a community, we must be in solidarity. If there is no solidarity, there is no community either.

**'REV. PROF.
JANUSZ
BALICKI**





CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DEBATE

The pandemic reduced the scale of migration to Europe, but at the same time significantly hindered political consultations on the EC's proposal, especially direct negotiations with the Member States. The process finally started in June, and the European Parliament is also discussing the pact.

The pact is a compromise between different approaches of the governments of the Member States to the problem of migration. It does not fully satisfy anyone, but it tries to move the EU discussion on European asylum policy forward. Flexible solidarity is the most disputable issue. In the worst case scenario, it may leave the countries most severely affected by migration without real assistance.

Changing the EU's migration and asylum policy requires greater cooperation with countries whose citizens migrate to Europe and with countries of transit. The EC believes that all of them also need to be assisted in coping with migration problems, protecting their borders, and fighting against smuggling groups. Humanitarian organizations, in turn, fear that the solutions proposed by the European Commission refer to large groups of people, but may jeopardise the rights of individuals resulting from international agreements.



The migration crisis is often dehumanized. We look at the numbers and we do not see the people behind them, we do not see their dramas or the reasons why they leave their homes.

**CHRISTINE
GOYER**





CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DEBATE

Europe has realised that it will not limit migration if it does not help to prevent its causes, which requires cooperation with neighbouring countries and international organizations, as well as creating permanent mechanisms to reduce economic inequalities in the world and prevent a climate disaster.

EU Member States must find a solution before the pandemic is over and the waves of immigrants increase again. Europe realises that it will continue to be a destination for people from Africa and Asia to migrate north. Some of them are fleeing from conflicts, others are looking for a better life and jobs.

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The publication only reflects the position of its authors. The European Commission is not responsible for its content.



In the draft Pact, it seems dangerous to me to focus on the countries of origin and building cooperation with them. Because we can get too dependent on them, and these are not necessarily democratic countries.

**MAŁGORZATA
PACEK**

