



**European
Movement
International**

Migration and Europe Protecting fundamental rights

Looking beyond the crisis and emergency measures adopted under the Common European Agenda on Migration, the EU must develop a comprehensive and sustainable, long term approach which takes into account the following:

Dignity and respect

The core of any policy should be that refugees and asylum seekers are, first and foremost, human beings and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Any European approach to reduce arrivals to the EU must therefore never be at the expense of ensuring access to protection for those in need. The unprecedented scale of migrant flows does not in any way legitimise an erosion of fundamental rights and humanitarian standards – especially not in view of the rising trend of anti-immigrant populism in the EU.

Access to legal asylum procedures must be available for all, respecting the rule of law, and including set decision deadlines to provide certainty, personal interviews and better access to information. Special measures must be put in place to assist particularly vulnerable migrants such as women and unaccompanied children arriving in the EU.

In this context, the European Movement welcomes developments towards a European Union Asylum Agency, as well as the setting of standards for a uniform status for refugees or persons eligible for subsidiary protection with a view to enhancing the equal treatment of asylum seekers and coherent recognition rates among Member States.

Solidarity

Efforts in the area of migration policy have to be made by all Member States

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in order to alleviate the pressure on the main countries of arrival. This means that national leaders have to take responsibility and refrain from nationalistic and anti-migration rhetoric and action which blocks unanimous decision making, forces the EU to resort to Qualified Majority Voting and undermines European solidarity.

The European Movement supports the fair sharing of responsibility to host asylum seekers and refugees, according to the economic and social capacities of EU Member States and EEA states. Such a distribution system offers a structural solution to the fluctuating influx of migrants. Coercive transfers should be avoided.

An open Europe

Whereas the number of refugees arriving in Europe in recent years has been exceptionally high, the open nature of Europe should be preserved. Schengen cannot be compromised. Free movement is a fundamental right for EU citizens. A 'Fortress Europe' runs contrary to the founding values of the European Union.

As a substantial financial contributor to development cooperation, the EU should continue its work to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. This should

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however not lead to development aid being used to strengthen the 'Fortress Europe'.

Legal migration

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lenge which also offers opportunities for a continent characterised by demographic decline and with labour markets in need of skilled workers. As an essential part of the European Agenda on Migration, channels of legal migration should be fostered and promoted in order to prevent further humanitarian disasters and counter human trafficking.

Persons seeking international protection should be able to apply for a European humanitarian visa in their country of origin directly. With the issuing of visas on humanitarian grounds currently falling outside the scope of EU law, efforts made by the European Parliament to include specific provisions in the Union Visa Code is welcomed.

A common approach to legal migration under the Union Resettlement Framework is an opportunity to counter migrant smuggling and to disincentivise migrants from choosing the precarious and illegal route to Europe. Resettlement should however not become a tool for migration management supersed-

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ing the humanitarian objectives in such an approach. This also holds true for

the one-for-one scheme under the EU-Turkey deal which, albeit having reduced the number of irregular arrivals to the EU, has led to precarious and inhumane conditions for refugees stranded in the Greek islands. The outsourcing of protection responsibilities must be avoided.

Important changes have been proposed in the revision of the EU Blue Card Directive, including the lowering of salary thresholds, shorter length of work contracts, better family reunification conditions, facilitated mobility, and the abolition of parallel national schemes. In order to increase mobility in the EU labour market, the Blue card should, however, be more accessible and flexible and should be applied in a transparent and

similar way by all Member States, limiting room for interpretation on grounds for refusal. Third country nationals working in the EU should receive equal treatment as EU citizens with regard to pay, working conditions, social rights, and with regard to freedom of movement within the EU.

Integration

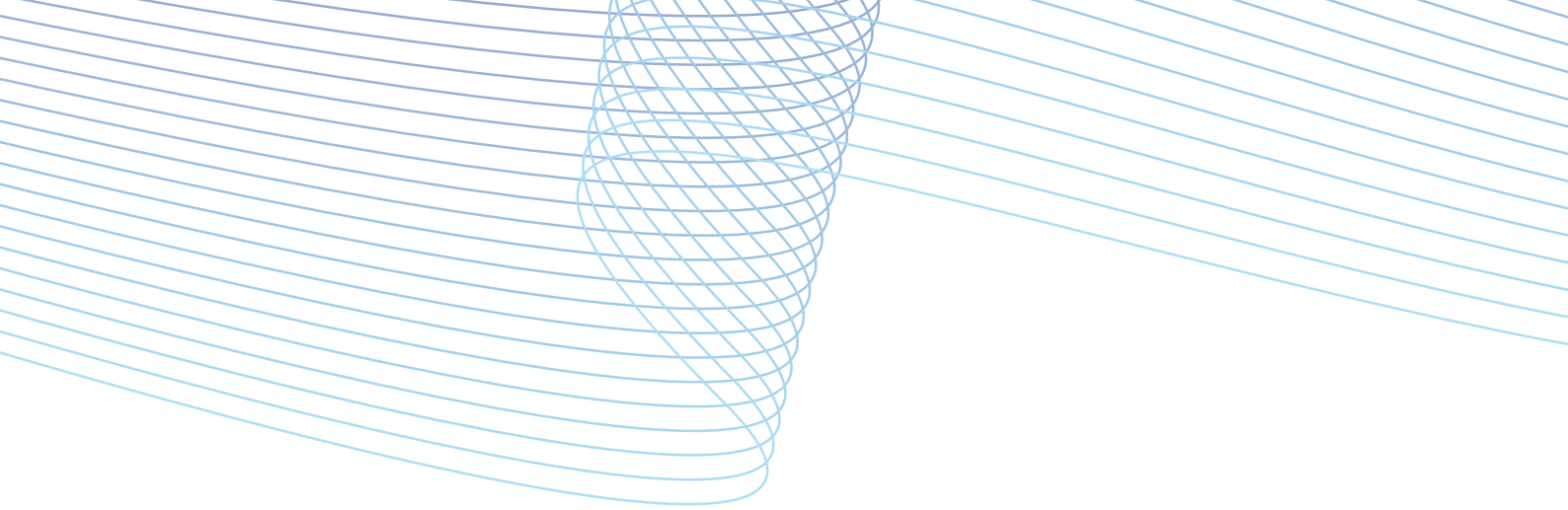
Social inclusion policies are indispensable for the successful integration of those arriving in Europe. Efforts should be made to ensure that refugees are not discriminated against when it comes to the provision of social protections.

Refugees and especially child migrants must have access to education and health care.

With timely measures and the appropriate funding Europe should help national and local authorities alleviate the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers. Any support on an EU level should be carried out in close cooperation with



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national, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations.

European standards for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers should be developed so that they are able to live harmoniously in the host societies for the period of asylum.

The European Movement International is convinced that the above points are imperative in order to formulate a determined response to the migration crisis. While respecting the democratic process in order to ensure wide backing for a European policy on migration and keeping in mind international conventions on refugee law, national leaders and European institutions should take responsibility for the lives and wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe.

Background

Two years after the adoption of the European Agenda on Migration, countless measures have been adopted on the EU level to reduce incentives for irregular migration, save lives and secure the EU's external borders, reform the Common European Asylum System and create channels for legal migration.

Today, migration remains a priority issue in the EU, where the migration crisis continues to bring negative repercussions. Across Europe, anti-migration sentiment remains and violence continues. On the political level, leaders opt for nationalist rhetoric and building fences.

But the consequences on the individual level are most profound: the dignity and safety of refugees and asylum seekers is violated by degrading or non-existent

shelter conditions and ad-hoc proposals to classify the safety of countries of origin. In managing the refugee crisis, the EU must make sure it keeps the humanitarian perspective in mind and lead by example in defending fundamental rights.

The European Movement

seeks to provide a platform to encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens and stakeholders in the development of European solutions to our common challenges. We offer thought leadership on the issues that affect Europe and we give the opportunity to representatives from European associations, political parties, enterprises, trade unions, NGOs and other stakeholders, through our 39 National Councils and 34 International Associations, to work together, towards improving the way that Europe works.

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