EUROPEAN UNION

Securing Europe's Borders

The EU's Approach to Migration and Border Management

September 2026

EUROPE'S MIGRATION TRANSFORMATION

55%
Decrease in illegal border crossings into the EU over the last two years

1,500+
Potential security threats stopped since rollout of Entry/Exit System in Oct. 2025

21%
Decline in asylum applications since 2023

8.1%
Increase in return of illegal migrants in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025

Beginning in June 2026, the **EU Pact on Migration and Asylum** establishes a modernized European migration framework. The rules ensure that the EU has strong and secure external borders, that people's rights are guaranteed and there are fewer loopholes for abuse, and that no EU country is left alone to deal with migration under pressure.

> "Europe must have secure borders and a migration system that works. That means stopping irregular migration, enforcing our rules, and making sure those who have no right to stay are returned. We are strengthening our borders and our ability to deliver on all three."



Jovita Neliupšienė
EU Ambassador to the United States

SECURE BORDERS, STRONGER EUROPE: HOW THE EU PROTECTS ITS BORDERS

- Robust screening of arrivals and departures
- Biometric registration and shared databases
- Faster border asylum procedures
- Expanded mechanisms for returns
- Crisis protocols for mass migration and hybrid threats
- 3,800 Frontex officers deployed at EU's external borders



> In Germany, decreased asylum applications are down by more than a third again this year. Sweden registered 8,485 applications last year – the lowest in 40 years. Denmark registered 1,835 by the end of November – a historic low. By every measure, **Europe has not had this much control over illegal migration in a decade.**



Magnus Brunner
EU Commissioner for Migration

THE ENTRY/EXIT SYSTEM: WHO COMES, WHO LEAVES, WHO STAYS?

- Most modern border management system that digitally registers non-EU travelers visiting 29 participating European countries (Schengen Area members).
- It replaces manual passport stamping with biometric recording to track short-stay visits to Europe.
- It registers both entries and exits, allowing authorities to track who remains inside the EU's borders.
- It enables efficient identification of overstayers, prevents irregular migration, and helps protect the security of everyone living in or travelling to Europe.

FIGHTING ASYLUM FRAUD: EU INITIATIVES

- The EU is tightening asylum rules to prevent abuse of the system. Applicants must submit biometric data, meet strict deadlines, attend interviews, stay in the responsible Member State, and cooperate with authorities.
- The EU also limits repeat claims by preventing individuals from repeatedly applying across different Member States without new evidence.

FIVE PRIORITIES: MIGRATION STRATEGY

1. Migration Diplomacy: Stronger cooperation with partners and neighbors.
2. Swift returns, applying new return regulation.
3. Further strengthening external borders. Reinforced Frontex support on the ground and in third countries.
4. Labor and talent mobility to boost competitiveness.
5. Fair, firm, and adaptable asylum system.

RETURNING ILLEGAL MIGRANTS: A FIRM AND FAIR APPROACH

- Successful returns were up 13% in Q4 2025 compared to the previous year (33,860 non-EU citizens were effectively returned to a third country).
- Returns to a third country can either be forced (41% in 2025) or voluntary (58%).
- Individuals with no legal right to stay are removed by individual EU Member States' national authorities, supported by Frontex.



SIMILAR CHALLENGES, DIFFERENT SCALE

- The U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico are 7,500 miles long. The European borders with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Türkiye, Moldova, Western Balkans, and North African countries are 28,000 miles long.
- Only 90 miles separate the U.S. from Cuba. Only 65-70 miles separate Cyprus from Lebanon, Italy from Tunisia, or Greece from Türkiye.
- The U.S. has 50 states but only one federal migration policy and enforcement. The EU has 27 Member States, 27 different systems, and 27 different enforcement institutions.

READ THE PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE UNITED STATES
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