

Long-term European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy

JHA Counsellors, 12 January 2026

Input received from MS

Comments received by 9 MS focusing on:

1. Migration diplomacy

→ Partnerships with third countries and whole-of-route approach; protection in regions of origin; innovative solutions; use of incentives and leverages; funding.

2. Strong EU borders

→ role for EU agencies; rights-compliant use of technology/AI; instrumentalization.

3. Asylum and migration system

→ Implement existing rules and the Pact as a priority; strengthen reception; limit secondary movements, keep balance between solidarity and responsibility; digitalisation; support for TPB/UA.

4. Returns and readmission

→ Make effective returns a core goal; explore innovative tools e.g. incentives, return hubs; focus on TC deserving particular attention e.g. SY, AF; EU-wide approach

5. Legal migration and mobility

→ Broader “legal migration” framing; focus on preventing exploitation; respect national competences; strengthen administrative cooperation and information exchange between MS.

6. Funding and operational support

→ Ensure adequate EU funding and appropriate governance, especially for external dimension; support to MS and strong role for EU agencies to support MS and the goals of the Strategy.



Six priority areas

1. Migration Diplomacy
2. Strong EU borders
3. A fair, firm and adaptable asylum and migration system
4. Returns and readmission
5. Legal pathways and labour mobility
6. Strategic use of financial resources and enhancing operational support

- Based on the national strategies, consultations with MS and other stakeholders (e.g. EP, civil society)...



1. Migration Diplomacy

- **Main goals:** ~~reduce~~ prevent irregular arrivals, increase returns/readmissions, fight smuggling, ensure protection along the route, talent attraction
- **Cooperation with third countries,** Strong **comprehensive** partnerships and the **whole-of-route approach** promoting (i) **EU interests and values** and (ii) **joint responsibility**.
- **Use of leverages and incentives:** Visa (Article 25a), trade (GSP, FTAs), funds.
- Continue **strategic and comprehensive partnerships** with Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan; strengthen the cooperation on migration with Mauritania, Senegal, Lebanon (non-exhaustive list).
- **Main areas of cooperation:**
 - Return and readmission (see slide 7)
 - Strong focus on migrants' smuggling: follow-up to the Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling
 - Support to third countries in managing asylum and migration, border management
 - Protection of people in need along the route and foster voluntary return and reintegration scheme from third countries
 - Promoting legal pathways for protection (including resettlement)
 - labour mobility (see slide 8)
- **Cooperation with international partners and global governance** (Review of the UN Global Compact; Council of Europe)



2. Strong EU borders

- **A more effective control of access to the EU territory and the Schengen area**
 - Full roll-out of interoperability - Entry/Exit System, Eurodac, ETIAS, VIS.
 - Ensuring resources for the Agencies under the next MFF.
 - New Pact provisions – Screening, mandatory border procedures.
- **Leveraging technology for the Union's border management and protection**
 - Building its intelligence-driven capacities to protect its external borders – enhancements to EUROSUR.
 - Digitalisation of the EU's border management – visa procedures, digitalisation of travel documents.
 - Support to deployment of new technologies, including AI – data analysis, preparedness and resilience.
 - European capacity for automated identity recognition systems for the purpose of migration and border management.
- **Revision of the Frontex regulation in 2026**
- **New EIBM Strategy in 2028**



3. A fair, firm and adaptable asylum and migration system

- **The Pact remains the foundation** – focus on full and efficient implementation and operationalisation across the ten building blocks. Continue the common approach, combining horizontal and bilateral engagement. Strengthen a whole-of-government approach at all levels.
- Consolidation of the **annual migration management cycle**, maintaining solidarity and responsibility as key principles.
- Able to rapidly **respond and adjust** to new developments and challenges
- The first **review** of AMMR and APR to take place in 2027.
- Modernising asylum procedures through **digitalisation and AI**.
- Continuous **support to refugees from Ukraine** - Council conclusion as starting point and taking into account the volatile situation.



4. Return and readmission

- **Building a common European system for return**
 - Adoption and implementation of the **Return Regulation** and establishing a **common European system**.
 - **New Pact provisions** – issuance of decisions at the same time, mandatory return border procedure.
 - **Digitalisation of return procedures** – legislative proposal in 2026
 - **Improving return processes at operational level** – role of the return coordinator and HLNR.
 - **Revision of the Frontex regulation in 2026** - strengthening the agency's operational role in return operations both within and outside the EU.
- **Improving readmission by third countries**
 - **Foster cooperation using readmission agreements** – finalisation of negotiations with Nigeria and Kazakhstan.
 - **Reinforcing the use of incentives and leverages** - Art. 25a of the Visa Code, trade policies, and incentives.
 - **Better information exchange** between Member States Ensure Member States
 - Possibility of establishing '**return hubs**' outside the Union.
 - **Focus on returns from third country to a third country**, voluntary returns, reintegration.
 - **Syria and Afghanistan** – EU level coordination, common approach.



5. Labour mobility and legal pathways

- Focus on **labour mobility** and **talent attraction** targeting **EU needs** and increasing **competitiveness**.
- Ambition to become the most attractive place in the global race for talent (attract and retain). Labour mobility as part of **migration diplomacy and wider cooperation with partner countries** (EU Talent Partnerships, Talent Pool, pilot European Legal Gateway Office in India)
 - Comprehensive approach to include EU industry and employers.
 - Simplification and acceleration to address existing bottlenecks, including facility skills portability/recognition/validation while ensuring quality standards.
- Tackle **illegal employment, abuse and exploitation**: assessment of the Employer Sanctions Directive; mandate of the European Labour Authority; enforcement.
- **Comprehensive approach to promote/support integration** by better connecting efforts across EU policies.



6. STRATEGIC USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ENHANCING OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- **Next MFF 2028–2034**

- To ensure the necessary financial resources to support the objectives set out in the Strategy.
- COM proposal includes increased resources in most areas, incl. for external dimension, borders and the Pact.
- Establishment of a policy reference framework to support a performance-based implementation of future funding for the Member States.
- The new draft Global Europe Regulation with dedicated flexible funding for migration diplomacy and appropriate governance.

- **Operational support – focus on EU Agencies**

- Better coordination and sharing of resources – both internally and externally.
- Revision of the Frontex regulation in 2026 – focus on reinforcement of resources, return-related activities, external dimension.
- Revision of the Europol regulation in 2026 – focus on strengthening operational, analytical and technological support capacities.
- Evaluation of EUAA mandate in 2026, followed by possible amendment of its founding regulation.



Thank you

