

Migration and the European Union: towards a *new vision* of migration policies

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Immigration is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon and cannot be confined to the utilitarian aspect (use of immigration in the labour market, impact on public finances, etc.) or security questions. To ensure a healthy debate, this opinion examines the perceptions of Europe's citizens, European solidarity and the fears and resources that go hand in hand with migration issues.

Migration refers to "any movement of people from their usual place of residence, either within a country or across an international border".

The Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) is laying the foundations for a peaceful debate based on facts, existing legal frameworks and objective data.

It forms part of the political agenda of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which should be finalised before the European elections in June 2024. Through 20 recommendations, the opinion questions the Pact's ability to respond to current and future challenges, and proposes the expansion of certain aspects to achieve an ambitious model for European migration policy.



0.6%

the rate of permanent immigration into the EU, which represents 2.5 million entries for 447 million Europeans.

Source: OECD 2021

Immigration is not a mass phenomenon within the European Union.

We need to remind people of the actual migration situation and raise their awareness of it.

The Pact on Migration and Asylum is an opportunity to begin this fundamental work.

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1 AN AMBITIOUS SYSTEM TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF SAFE, LEGAL IMMIGRATION

- Simplifying and harmonising the European legislative framework and the existing provisions in all directives, to facilitate legal work-related immigration.
- Creating consultation mechanisms to determine work-related immigration requirements in a transparent and democratic way. The European Union must encourage its Member States to create forums for dialogue and consultation, based on those set up in Germany (national survey) and Spain (tripartite consultation).

2 IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF THE EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

- Making the solidarity-based relocation system compulsory and binding
- Strengthening the democratic accountability of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, through European Parliament scrutiny, particularly as regards fundamental rights.
- Increasing the resources allocated by Member States to Frontex, in terms of vessels, equipment and staff for search and rescue activities.

3 ENSURING RESPECT FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

- Protecting the humanitarian space necessary for the action of international organisations and NGOs providing assistance and relief to migrants through a European framework.
- Acknowledging the essential role of all the players in organised civil society, too often left out of the debate. Civil society must be involved in the Pact on Migration and Asylum, from implementation and improvement to evaluation.
- Organising a European Citizens' Conference on migration to examine the role of civil society, and strengthening participatory democracy on migration issues at European level.

4 STRENGTHENING INTEGRATION POLICIES

- Drawing up a European foundation for the integration of migrants, to complement the European foundation of social rights, harmonise integration policies and create concrete political initiatives.
- All EU Member States should ratify International Labour Organisation Convention 143 on migrant workers so as to strengthen respect for fundamental rights