

International Migrants Day – 18 December

Each year, 18 December is observed as International Migrants Day. Nominated by the United Nations General Assembly on 4 December 2000 in response to increasing migration in the world, the day aims to draw attention to the human rights of migrants, and highlight their contribution to our societies.

Background

The number of international migrants in the world has grown rapidly over the past 15 years. The UN [reports](#) that the global number reached 244 million in 2015, as compared to 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. Nearly two thirds of all international migrants live either in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million), followed by North America and Africa. This new reality creates challenges as well as opportunities for the societies in both regions of origin and destination.

Global cooperation on migration

At the [High-Level Dialogue](#) on International Migration and Development, organised by the UN General Assembly in September 2006, 132 UN member states adopted, by consensus, [resolution A/RES/61/208](#), which emphasises the need to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants, and reaffirms that international migration can contribute positively to countries of origin and destination, if underpinned by the right policies. It also calls for the strengthening of international cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally.

On 19 September 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted a set of commitments known as the [New York Declaration](#), at its first ever [summit](#) on large movements of refugees and migrants, calling member states to strengthen the protection of people on the move. The declaration is due to lead to the adoption of two new global compacts, one for [refugees](#) and another for [migrants](#) by the end of 2018.

Migration management in the EU

In the EU, migration is an area where the EU and its Member States have shared competence. In recent years, the priority given to this area has been reflected in the [EU budget](#), with €22 billion allocated to migration and security over the 2015-2018 period. [Acknowledging](#) that creating legal pathways to Europe is essential to stop irregular migration flows and to save migrants' lives, the EU is seeking ways to increase legal channels to the EU, be it through the [EU Blue Card](#) system for labour mobility, [resettlement](#) or [private sponsorship](#). At the same time, the national and local level is mostly in charge of integrating migrants into the host society, by offering them access to language courses, [education](#), and [cultural activities](#).

European Parliament position

The European Parliament has advocated a humane, solidarity-based and common approach to migration in its various resolutions and reports. In its [resolution](#) of 12 April 2016 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration, the European Parliament emphasised the need for developing safe and lawful routes for asylum-seekers and refugees into the EU, including through resettlement and integration policy. Furthermore, noting that the working-age population in the EU is projected to decline by 7.5 million by 2020, the Parliament encouraged the development of adequate legal economic migration channels. In its 2017 [resolution](#) on 'addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU external action', the Parliament recalled that international migration can contribute to socio-economic development, as it has done historically, and called on governments to address migration as a regular human phenomenon, taking into account the legitimate concerns of border management, protection of vulnerable groups and integration of all migrants.

