

Commitments made at the hearing of **YLVA JOHANSSON** Commissioner-designate Home Affairs



The commissioner-designate, Ylva Johansson, appeared before the European Parliament on 01 October to answer questions put by MEPs from the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. During the hearing, she made a number of commitments which are highlighted in this document. These commitments refer to her portfolio, as described in the [mission letter](#) sent to her by Ursula von der Leyen, President-elect of the European Commission, including:

- General approach
- Common European values
- A fresh start on migration and
- Internal security

Please note that the quotes included in this document only make reference to oral commitments made during the [hearing](#). The [verbatim report](#) of the public hearing is available on the [Commissioners-designate hearings website](#). The Commissioner-designate was also sent some written questions in advance of the hearing to which she provided [written answers](#).



General approach

"I'm committed to a solid and evidence-based [...] policy-making in the areas covered by my portfolio. My aim is to apply the principles of better regulations to the preparation of future proposals in my portfolio."

"[...]it's important for me to have a gender perspective in all actions that we take."

Common European values

"The European Union is based on values, and these must be our guiding principles. I will not only defend and speak up loudly for these values inside the European Union, but also to the rest of the world. For me, it's crucial to protect our democracies against populism and extremism and to always speak up for human rights."

"The best interest of the child and a gender perspective are preconditions for what we do and need to be present in all our policy-making and that I will assure you."

A fresh start on migration

New Pact on Migration and Asylum

"My top priority [...] is to develop the new pact on migration and asylum. It's going to be difficult, but [...] failure is not an option[...] We must have a common European pact on migration and asylum."

"I must rely on the willingness of Member States to welcome resettled migrants. We have had an increase in the number of resettlements in the last years in the EU. I'm proud of that. I think that we should continue further along that way [...]"

"[...] let me be clear on one thing: the solidarity mechanism is not voluntary in the European Union and should not be."

Relaunch the reform of asylum rules

"[...] each Member State has the obligation to receive their asylum applications, to process these applications and to establish whether people will return or if it's not possible to effect the return on account of the principle of non-refoulement. [...] The Commission can help and facilitate the Member States in dealing with this, but [...] This is something for each Member State. It cannot be done by the Commission."

Close loopholes between asylum and return rules

"While we must honour our values and legal responsibilities towards those in need of international protection, we also have to ensure that those not eligible to stay are returned. Last year, only one third of those ordered to leave were actually returned."

"Yes, I will step up with the efforts on return. I think,[...] we have to be clearer, we have to have better processes and we have to close the loopholes between those who are eligible to stay and those who have to return."

"I do think that we should develop more readmission agreements with third countries. This is a very important aspect, and the Commission can help to build that. I know that, in some cases, Member States have their own agreements and I think we also need cooperation between the Commission and Member States so that we can find the most efficient way for readmission, because we need that."

Search and rescue

"A crucial element of the new pact on migration and asylum will be a more sustainable, reliable and permanent approach to search and rescue. I have a clear mission to replace ad hoc solutions."

"I know that Parliament had been asking for some guidelines on a clarification, where they have to clarify that genuine humanitarian assistance never should be criminalised. This is an issue which I look forward to looking into more closely and that might be a way forward."

Legal pathways to the European Union

"I will work with Member States to step up resettlement and to look at developing humanitarian corridors for urgent needs."

"It's also through cooperation that, with for example the UN authorities, we can help migrants. I think that we should continue having agreements with third countries, and I think that an important part of that kind of agreement must be to develop legal pathways to the European Union. This is why we also need that kind of cooperation with third countries when it comes to migration."

"I agree that it's important for economic migrants that we should find better ways for our legal pathways to Europe, both for resettlement and for legal migrants that come to work in Europe."

"I am aware of the proposal of humanitarian visas. That could be a discussion that we can continue on."

Stronger cooperation with countries of origin and transit

“EU cooperation with Turkey and Libya is not [...] harming the human rights of migrants. Migrants’ rights are being harmed and human rights are being violated, but this is not by the cooperation. It’s also through cooperation that, with for example the UN authorities, we can help migrants. I think that we should continue having agreements with third countries[...]. This is why we also need that kind of cooperation with third countries when it comes to migration.”

Fight against human traffickers and smugglers

“Saving lives at sea is our moral duty. This is linked to stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers. We need to do more to break up the cruel business model of smugglers and the criminal networks behind”

“I think to destroy the business model of the smugglers is really, really important. We can see that those who are smuggling people are also smuggling other things. These are organised criminals that are really making a lot of money out of this actually, so we have to fight this business model.”

“I think it’s extremely important that we step up the fight towards trafficking and I must say I am ready to consider new legislative proposals in this area[...].”

Reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency

“[...] to secure our external borders, it’s very clear that the Commission has a role to play to assist Member States with protecting the external border. That’s why we are stepping up so very much on Frontex, for example. It’s, of course, to be able to better protect our external borders and the role of the Commission and the agencies is to do that together with the Member States [...].”

Schengen Area

“[...] swift return to a fully functioning Schengen area without internal border controls will be a key objective for me.”

“This hopefully will also pave the way for further enlargement of Schengen.”

“[...] the last thing is always to start an infringement procedure. That is the role of the Commission, so that could always be the case. But I do think [...] that shouldn’t be my first thing to do. I think I should start with a dialogue with the countries and try to find ways

forward in other aspects before starting an infringement procedure.”

Internal security

“[...] we can’t face our citizens who are victims of organised crime or terrorism saying ‘we couldn’t defend you because they used new technology’. I understand this is not what you are saying, but it’s important that we can step up to this.”

“Too often the most vulnerable members of our society are the victims of those crimes. I firmly believe that society has to protect them and I will be their strongest advocate.”

Prevent, prosecute and respond to terrorism

“I will focus on filling the gaps in our approach to EU internal security and to ensure that the Union is equal to the task. My aim is to build an effective security union [...] This means ensuring that the laws in place are effectively implemented. It means closing remaining gaps in our security framework. Organised crime, drugs, human trafficking, child sex abuse and exploitation are all major priorities for me.”

“We can see that organised criminals are being more and more professional and developing their business model, and we have to step up to that at European level to be able to fight them in the right way.”

“When it comes to terrorist fighters that might come back to their home nation, this is a decision for each Member State to take, but the Commission can help to facilitate cooperation so that people can really be brought to court and be punished for their terrorist actions.”

“We must improve the cooperation between the police forces and also together with Europol in the European Union. As I answered to another question earlier, the most urgent thing, I think, is trust.”

Fight against radicalisation

“Fighting all forms of radicalisation is also on top of my agenda.”

“[...] to fight radicalisation. This, I think, is also very, very important and this is a task that has to be tackled in an holistic approach in each Member State, but the EU can help and can also offer expertise in this area and I think this is very, very important.”

“I will work tirelessly to close down the space for terrorists to plan, finance and carry out their attacks.

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The English language quotes included in this document are based on the [verbatim](#) of the hearings, made available a posteriori.

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