

---

## New initiatives: improving the management and security of EU borders

**The influx of irregular migrants continues to pose a challenge to Europe. According to Frontex 13,800 people had to be rescued in the central Mediterranean in the last week of May alone.**

The EU is working on different ways to manage migration better. The European Commission presented a new plan to address the root causes of migration in plenary on 7 June, which was debated by MEPs. Read on for an overview of upcoming initiatives.

### In plenary this week

The new proposal is about stimulating investment in countries where migrants to Europe come from in order to boost growth and create jobs there. The plenary debate on 7 June also featured Commissioner Frans Timmermans and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

On the same day MEPs discussed with Dimitris Avramopoulos, the commissioner responsible for migration, the proposal for a so-called [blue card](#), giving highly-qualified workers from abroad the right to live and work in the EU. They also discussed plans to revise how migrants can obtain the right to work here and to better integrate them once they are here.

In addition MEPs are dealing with a number of very important legislative proposals that promise to improve how the EU's external borders are policed and how migrants and refugees are treated once they arrive.

### European Border and Coast Guard

One of the issues the EU is looking at is how to protect its external borders. The [national governments asked](#) the European Commission to come up with proposals for a [European Border and Coast Guard](#). The new agency would unite Frontex and the national authorities responsible for border management, which would continue to look after the day-to-day management of the external borders.

The border and coast guard would have the right to intervene meaning it is able to take action even when a member state is unable or unwilling to take the necessary measures. It would also

be involved with monitoring and supervising migratory flows into and within the EU. In addition the European Return Office would be part of the agency, helping to send back migrants staying here illegally. A standard European document for return would make it easier for countries outside the EU to accept migrants coming back. Finally, the border and coast guard would work together with other organisations and EU agencies to help prevent terrorism.

Parliament's [civil liberties committee approved the plans](#) on 30 May. Latvian EPP member Artis Pabriks, responsible for steering the plans through Parliament commented: "The EU needs safer, better managed external borders and thus the European Border and Coast Guard as soon as possible. The European Border and Coast Guard is not a silver bullet that can solve the migration crisis that the EU is facing today or restore the Schengen area. Yet it is the first step."

Committee members said intervention should not be up to the European Commission, but to the member states deciding by qualified majority.

Following the committee vote, the Parliament has started talks with the Council, representing EU countries, to reach an agreement on the new legislation.

### **Returning migrants**

The EU is also looking at ways to best return migrants who have not been granted asylum. At the moment these procedures are ineffective and can take a long time. EU countries might give substitute documents to people without the proper papers, but these are often not recognised by countries outside the EU as there are no common standards and the documents have low security features.

The Commission is proposing to introduce a [standard EU travel document for migrants](#) who don't fulfil or no longer fulfil the conditions for entry, stay or residence in the EU. Member states would then be required to use the same format and include the same personal information in order to speed up the return process.

The [civil liberties committee approved the plans](#) on 30 May. Finnish ECR member Jussi Halla-aho, responsible for steering the proposal through Parliament, said: "One small piece in the puzzle and one step in the right direction."

The proposal will now also have to be approved by the Council before it can enter into force.

### **Safe countries of origin**

The Commission is proposing an EU common list of safe countries of origin to fast-track applications from people that come from countries that are considered safe. At the moment

these list are defined at the national level and are not coordinated with other EU countries.

The proposal has to be approved by Parliament and the Council before it can enter into force.

## Better information sharing

Differentiating between refugees and economic migrants can prove challenging as well as identifying potential terrorists. This is why it is important to collect and share more information on the people entering the EU.

The [European Criminal Records Information System](#) (ECRIS) was established in 2012 to exchange information on criminal convictions of EU citizens. The Commission is proposing to extend the system to also include people from outside the EU. MEPs want Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency, and border agency Frontex to also be able to access the database on request on a case-by-case basis.

The civil liberties committee approved the plans on 30 May. "We need to restore public confidence that we are able to monitor who comes in the EU," said UK ECR member Timothy Kirkhope, who is responsible for steering the [proposal](#) through Parliament.

## In plenary this week

Migration was discussed during this week's plenary session in Strasbourg. On Tuesday 7 June MEPs discussed a financial plan for Africa as well as an action plan for the integration of migration with Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign affairs chief.

*This article was originally published on 2 June and has been updated to reflect new developments.*

[Read our article on EU border controls and managing migration.](#)

## Find out more

[Migration top story](#)

[Civil liberties committee](#)

[Infographic on migration and asylum](#)

## Studies

[European border and coast guard](#)

[Cooperation with non-EU countries](#)

## Briefings

[List of safe countries](#)

[Readmission agreements](#)



©European Union - Frontex



**Returning migrants staying illegally in Europe**

<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=4b7f6a46-2d98-4a15-a434-a61300cae1d5>