

The EU response to the migrant crisis



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Greece's Hellenic Coast Guard approaches a boat containing 43 Syrian refugees in the Mediterranean sea © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

The migration crisis has exposed shortcomings in Europe's asylum system, compelling the EU into action. Learn about Parliament's response to the crisis.

In 2015 there were 1.83 million [illegal crossings](#) at the EU's external borders. While this number fell to 150,114 in 2018, Parliament has a number of proposals to remedy shortcomings in the EU's asylum policy: from reforming the asylum system to strengthening border security, making the return policy more efficient and promoting the integration of refugees.

Reinforcing the asylum system and sharing responsibility between EU countries

At the heart of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is the **Dublin regulation**, which determines the country responsible for processing each asylum claim - generally the first EU country the applicant has entered. The Dublin system has resulted in border countries like Italy and Greece bearing the brunt of the migration crisis of late.

As well as a major [reform of the Dublin system](#), the European Parliament has called for tightening border controls and improving the ability of member states to track people entering Europe. MEPs also want to put in place clear Europe-wide rules for distinguishing regular migrants from refugees, to ensure fair and equal treatment of asylum-seekers, and make sure that every member state contributes its fair share to solving the problem (for example by participating in the relocation of refugees).

[Read our page on reinforcing the Common European Asylum System](#)



Video

<http://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=552375c8-dd23-4db0-85c2-a56800a2488e>

Securing EU external borders and managing migration flows

The refugee crisis put enormous pressure on national border authorities. Parliament called for a strengthening of the EU border agency Frontex, and in December 2015, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a new **European Border and Coast Guard** with the aim of reinforcing the management and security of the EU's external borders and supporting national border guards.

The [new agency](#) was launched in October 2016. There are plans to give the agency [a standing corps of 10,000 border guards](#) by 2027.

Members have also backed a proposal to strengthen the current [European Asylum Support Office](#) (EASO) that will become the **EU Agency for Asylum**.

In addition to the March 2016 **EU-Turkey deal** to return all irregular migrants coming to Greece via Turkey, the EU is also taking measures to make its **return policy** more efficient.

MEPs also want the EU to adopt a [long-term strategy](#) to help tackle the root causes of migration.

[Read our page on EU border control and the management of migrants](#)

Fostering refugees' integration in Europe

The EU is also taking steps to help migrants integrate into societies in their new home countries. MEPs are debating a detailed action plan on migration proposed by the Commission.

Parliament is also proactive and has called for more funding for programmes to create new opportunities such as jobs and education for vulnerable groups and refugees in particular. MEPs have also stressed the need to reach out to small business owners and create incentives to hire migrants.

[Read our page on the integration of refugees in Europe](#)

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[Our latest news on the migrant crisis](#)

[The EU's migration challenge: possible responses to the refugee crisis](#)