

## MEPs urge the EU to deliver a credible migration and asylum policy



MEPs discussed their expectations for the special EU summit on migration and asylum policy © European Union 2023

**In a plenary discussion with the Swedish Presidency and President von der Leyen, MEPs presented their views on how to deal with the migratory challenges facing Europe.**

On behalf of the Presidency of the Council, Swedish Minister for EU Affairs Jessika Roswall noted that in next week's extraordinary European Council, EU leaders will look into migration issues, as well as the situation in Ukraine, the economic agenda and a European industrial plan. On migration, the focus will be on controlling external borders, cooperation with third countries and returning migrants and asylum-seekers without a right to stay in the EU more efficiently to their countries of origin or transit. The European Council is also expected to call for the

legislative work on the pact for asylum and migration to continue. Minister Roswall assured MEPs that negotiations in the Council on the pact are progressing at a good pace.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed that migration is a European challenge that requires a European response. In her view, legislative work should continue with a view to concluding the pact by spring 2024, whilst developing additional actions to bolster the external borders and ensure faster and dignified returns of migrants to their countries of origin or transit. Improving voluntary solidarity, addressing the root causes of migration from third countries and introducing safe and legal pathways into Europe should also be EU priorities, President von der Leyen stated.

In the subsequent debate, MEPs wished to see results in the field of migration and asylum policy, after years of discussions among member states in the context of increasing irregular arrivals of persons, a majority of whom do not qualify to remain in the EU. Some speakers called for borders to be protected more effectively, including by setting up fences, which some wish to see financed with European funds. Several MEPs referred to the need to increase the rate of people being returned.

Others proposed processing asylum applications in the territory of third countries, as a way to reach the most vulnerable persons. They also talked about improving cooperation with third countries and addressing the root causes of migrations. Some speakers considered that search and rescue operations at sea by NGOs should be subject to a common code of conduct. Others insisted that, to be credible, EU migration policy must respect human rights and combine responsibility and solidarity towards refugees.

Noting that an aging population in Europe makes labour migration necessary, several MEPs advocated opening legal pathways into the EU. Finally, some underscored that the EU response to the massive arrival of Ukrainian refugees following the war showed that a different approach is possible and that migration can also be seen as an opportunity.

You can catch up with the debate [here](#).

### Further information

[Watch the video recording of the plenary debate \(01.02.2023\)](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

## Contacts

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