



European  
Commission

# A STEP-CHANGE IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND BORDER SECURITY

When the **Juncker Commission** took office, it made migration and border security top priorities for its 5-year term, in the knowledge that these were common challenges that needed to be addressed collectively by EU Member States. Soon after, the most severe refugee crisis the world has seen since the Second World War took hold, with immediate and far-reaching implications for the European Union. The Commission, alongside Member States, accelerated work to meet each new challenge as it arose, whilst at the same time working to put in place the building blocks of a new, **more sustainable way of managing migration and border security in the EU**. The result is that we have made more progress in the space of 4 years than was possible in the 20 years preceding them. Though there is still ground to cover, these achievements should not be underestimated.

**2 May 2014:** Jean-Claude Juncker unveils a 5-point plan on migration on the campaign trail.



**1 November 2014:** Juncker Commission takes office. Work starts on a new European Agenda for Migration set to be presented in June.

2014

**19 April 2015:** Over 700 people lose their lives off the coast of Lampedusa. The European Commission presents a 10-point plan focusing on saving lives at sea. The plan is endorsed by leaders at the European Council a few days later and resources for the two EU operations at sea are tripled as a result. Between 2015 and 2019 EU operations will go on to help rescue almost 730,000 people in the Mediterranean.



**13 May 2015:** The European Commission presents a European Agenda on Migration. The new strategy is presented a month earlier than planned and includes both immediate measures to tackle the unfolding crisis and plans for long-term reforms.

**May 2015:** establishment of the Hotspot approach in Greece and Italy. Hotspots will ensure that arrivals are duly registered and security checked.

**22 June 2015:** EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is launched.

**20 July 2015:** Member States agree on the first ever EU Resettlement scheme. Proposed by the Commission, the 2-year scheme will see 22,000 vulnerable refugees resettled to the EU voluntarily by Member States.

**14 and 22 September 2015:** Member States decide to set up an Emergency Relocation Mechanism. In total 35,000 persons – all those eligible – will be relocated from Greece and Italy within the next 2 years to help ease pressure on these two states.

**From 13 September 2015:** Five EU Member States reintroduce temporary internal border controls.

**From 21 September 2015:** the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism provides immediate in-kind support in countries along the Western Balkan route. A total of 900,000 items such as blankets, beds and tents will be provided during the refugee crisis.

**23 September 2015:** €1 billion in humanitarian assistance is mobilised for the UNHCR and World Food Programme to tackle underfinancing, one of the main triggers for refugee crisis.

**20 October 2015:** The crisis reaches its peak. More than 10,000 people cross from Turkey into Greece in a single day.

**25 October 2015:** The Western Balkans Leaders' Meeting is organised by the Commission to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the Balkans. Leaders agree to coordinate closely, to provide shelter for people on the move and limit secondary movements.

2015

**12 November 2015:** Valletta Summit on Migration. The EU launches the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa to address the root causes of irregular migration. As of today, 188 programmes and €3.6 billion are working to foster security and stability and improve conditions for would-be migrants in countries of origin and transit.

**15 December 2015:** Commission proposes to transform Frontex into a European Border and Coast Guard. The proposal will be adopted in a record time of just 9 months.

**22 February 2016:** European Migrant Smuggling Centre is launched at Europol.

**1 March 2016:** Western Balkan countries begin to gradually close their borders but arrivals from Turkey to Greece continue.

**15 March 2016:** The Commission sets up a new Emergency Support Instrument to deliver emergency aid for refugees and migrants in Greece. Between 2015 and 2018 a total of €2 billion from the EU budget will be allocated to support migration management in Greece.

**18 March 2016:** The EU concludes an agreement with Turkey. It proves to be a game changer. Arrivals to Greece quickly drop by 97% and have remained low ever since. Irregular migrants will be returned to Turkey and more than €6 billion will be mobilised to support 3.5 million Syrian in Turkey.



2016

**4 May and 13 July 2016:** Commission proposes a comprehensive reform of the Common European Asylum System to ensure solidarity with Member States under pressure and better prevent abuse and secondary movements.

**7 June 2016:** Commission sets out Action Plan on Integration.

**28 June 2016:** European Council endorses a Migration Partnership Framework for third countries, proposed by the Commission, to strengthen external action on migration.

**6 October 2016:** A new European Border and Coast Guard is launched and deploys over 900 border guards to help Member States secure the external borders.



**15 December 2016: Systematic checks:** Member States adopt the Commission's proposal to introduce systematic checks against all security databases of all persons crossing the EU's external borders.

## 2017

**Second half of 2016 – first half 2017:** Central Mediterranean route via Italy becomes the main entry point for irregular migrants.

**2 March 2017: Commission presents new Action Plan on Return and recommendations** to Member States on how to make return procedures more effective.

**22-23 June 2017: European Council calls for further action to stem the flow of migrants from Libya to Italy** including through training of the Libyan coast guard, closer cooperation with countries of origin and transit, further efforts to increase returns, and a code of conduct for NGOs operating in the Mediterranean.

**4 July 2017: Commission sets out Action Plan to support Italy, reduce pressure and increase solidarity**



**27 September 2017: Back to Schengen:** The Commission proposes to adapt the Schengen Borders Code provisions on temporary internal border controls and calls for the phasing out of internal controls which could be gradually substituted with enhanced police controls where needed.

**27 September 2017: Commission sets up a new resettlement scheme for 50,000** vulnerable people, the biggest EU scheme to this date. Member States commit to voluntarily resettling 50,000 by the end of 2019.

**23 November 2017: Launch of a €4.5 billion EU External Investment Plan.** €3.7 billion has already been allocated to projects since, helping to create jobs and growth in Africa and the European Neighbourhood.

**30 November 2017: Establishment of the joint AU-EU-UN Taskforce** to address the situation of migrants in Libya: since then, there have been almost 37,000 assisted voluntary returns to countries of origin and 2,500 of the most vulnerable refugees have been evacuated from Libya and are given free passage to Europe via resettlement.

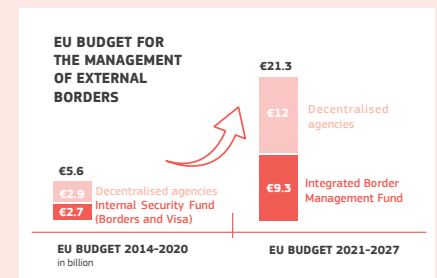
**12 December 2017: Interoperability of security systems:** The Commission proposes to close information gaps between information systems for security, border and migration and ensure swifter data exchange between all systems and authorities.

**December 2017: Arrivals via the Central Mediterranean route reduced by 80%** as compared to the first half of 2017 – they will remain at this relatively low level throughout 2018 thanks to joint EU efforts with African partner countries and in Libya.



## 2018

**12 June 2018: Commission proposes to triple funding for migration and border management to €34.9 billion** under the next EU budget 2021-27, learning the lessons from the past when the EU had to use all the flexibility in the existing budget to mobilise an additional €3.9 billion that was urgently needed to tackle the crisis.



**Summer 2018-early 2019: Search and Rescue:** NGO vessels with rescued persons remain at sea for several days. The Commission takes on an ad-hoc coordinating role to enable safe disembarkation. The Commission and Member States start working on temporary arrangements for disembarkation that would provide predictability and avoid tensions.

**12 September 2018: Border protection:** Commission proposes to further reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard with a standing corps of 10,000 border guards, a stronger role on returns.

**12 September 2018: Commission proposes to create a reinforced EU Asylum Agency and to overhaul the EU's rules on return** to speed up return procedures, better prevent absconding and increase effective returns.

**December 2018:** In 2018, the **Western Mediterranean route** via Morocco and Spain has become the most used route by irregular migrants, even if figures do not compare to the crisis in 2015 (65,000 arrivals in Spain in 2018).



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION SINCE 2015



**Irregular arrivals down** to pre-crisis levels: 150,000 irregular were detected in 2018 – the **lowest level in 5 years**: 25% less than in 2017 and 90% less than during the peak of the crisis in 2015.



**Saving lives:** EU action contributed to almost **730,000** rescues at sea since 2015.



**Protecting migrants:** The EU helped **almost 37,000** migrants stranded in Libya return safely home in cooperation with the IOM, UN and African Union.



**Fighting smugglers:** In 2018 alone, Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre had a key role in **more than a hundred** high priority smuggling cases.



**Protecting our borders:** The new European Border and Coast Guard Agency was established in **2016** and, if co-legislators agree, will be further reinforced with a standing corps of **10,000** border guards.



**Stepping up returns:** Formal readmission agreements and practical arrangements are now in place with **23** countries of origin and transit.



**Integration:** Between 2015 and 2017, **€140 million** of the EU budget went into integration measures through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.



**Safe and legal pathways:** Since 2015, more than **50,000** vulnerable refugees have been resettled to EU Member States.



**Responsibility-sharing:** Almost **35,000** asylum seekers – all those eligible – were relocated from Greece and Italy to other EU Member States under the EU's relocation emergency scheme.



**Solidarity abroad:** Over **5.3 million** vulnerable migrants, refugees and displaced people benefited from basic support under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. More than **80%** of EU humanitarian aid in 2018 supported the needs of forcibly displaced persons across the world.