

# EU leaders: Change course and end your war on migrants [updated version – May 2025]

In October 2024, 70+ migrant-led organisations and 140 supporters [wrote to EU institutions](#) to demand alternatives to the EU's deadly border regime. Following further announcements of rollbacks on asylum rights and of deportation plans, and in a context of an ever-accelerating global fascist shift, we reiterate our call for EU leaders to change course and end their war on migrants.

Attacks on migrants' rights are the beginning of attacks on everybody. Anti-migrant politics and the subsequent degradation of rights have opened the door for rollbacks in women's rights and the right to abortion, anti-gender movements, youth movements, anti-worker shifts and the widespread repression of civil liberties. Collectively, these trends disproportionately impact communities at risk of state violence, including poor people, (undocumented) migrants, women, racialised, queer and trans people, young people, and sex workers.

**We, organisations led by migrants and racialised people, along with our supporters, reiterate our call to European leaders to condemn the violent, punitive and immoral turn in European migration politics in recent weeks.**

In recent months, we have watched the acceleration of a global fascist shift. Trump's victory in the United States and the electoral breakthrough of the far right in Germany further legitimise hate narratives and exclusionary politics all over the world. By imposing their racist and imperialist agenda, far right forces normalise attacks on migrant and racialised communities, including in countries governed by alleged centrist governments. These trends spur the erosion of international law and of the protection of human rights.

In Europe, we already see the rights of asylum seekers severely harmed. From the suspension of the right to asylum in Poland, to Austrian plans to halt family reunifications for refugees, Germany's reintroduction of the payment card for asylum seekers, Italy's attempt at offshore processing of asylum applications, and to the hasted freeze of Syrian asylum requests in several countries, European governments have reached a point of no return.

The demonisation and the criminalisation of our communities is also embodied in plans to facilitate the deportation of migrants. Germany's new deportation centre for asylum seekers at the border with Poland, as well as its pilot programme to transfer refugees to Greece, along with the Netherlands' proposal to send failed asylum seekers to Uganda are just a glimpse into the wider EU strategy to accelerate the pushback of migrants.

On March 11, the EU announced a new legal proposal called the "Return Regulation" which is another brick in Fortress Europe's inhumane and punitive approach to human movement. Under the guise of "efficiency" and "innovation", it proposes an insidious new approach that increases racial profiling and surveillance to 'detect' migrants, promotes off-shore detention centres, and even allows child detention.

The EU is not only declaring a war on migrants within its own boundaries, but also turning neighbouring countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Morocco into yet another frontline, with devastating consequences for those seeking safety and those showing solidarity. For instance, the Tunisian government, bolstered by EU funding under the guise of migration control and economic development, has escalated its repression, targeting not only migrants and people on the move but also those who dare to help them. Activists, aid workers, and even ordinary citizens offering assistance and denouncing racism, are being imprisoned and are facing charges of treason and conspiracy against state security.

This criminalisation of solidarity mirrors the EU's own growing hostility towards humanitarian action, as Member States vilify and obstruct those who challenge their inhumane policies and endorse authoritarian governments in doing so as well. The EU's new Facilitator's Package presented in November 2023 further criminalises migration and acts of solidarity with migrants, using the fight against people smugglers as pretext for police power grabs and punitive laws that target migrants and humanitarian actors. In general, Member States are increasingly repressing and policing activists showcasing solidarity. Recently, Germany has weaponised migration laws to order the deportation of three European and one American citizens over their alleged actions at pro-Palestinian, anti-genocide demonstrations. Police brutality is also escalating during protests, with threats to the right of peaceful assembly across Europe. These attacks against those who organise are facilitated by increased spending on policing infrastructures, including on surveillance and digital tools.

Instead of wasting billions on new offshore detention centres, illegal and costly deportation procedures, and the militarisation of borders, European leaders could implement policies in compliance with human rights, toward economic wellbeing, safety and community care, and invest in long-term solutions to address climate degradation, conflict, and economic decline.

**We reiterate our call on leaders to change course and present a meaningful alternative to current EU migration policy, which is illegal, immoral, and unworkable.**

We need:

- Safe and legal routes for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees;
- Pathways to regularisation and an end to the criminalisation of people on the move;
- To address the root causes of why people flee their countries, including by ending EU investment in the militarisation and securitisation of borders, the weapons trade, fossil fuels, and other industrial strategies contributing to conflict and climate degradation in the global South;
- To develop policies and redistribute resources to focus on addressing the needs of all people (including migrants, shift and gig economy workers, unpaid carers, and those in precarious work) instead of prioritising corporate profits;

A comprehensive economic and social strategy for everyone living in Europe.

We call on European leaders to change course and end their war on migrants. Instead, reorient your policies to centre a politics of care, protection and safety for all, including migrant communities.