



Press statement by President von der Leyen on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

Brussels, 23 September 2020

"Check against delivery"

Migration has always been a fact for Europe – and it will always be. Throughout centuries, it has defined our societies, enriched our cultures and shaped many of our lives. And this will always be the case.

Migration is complex. The old system no longer works. The Commission's Package on Migration and Asylum, which we present today, offers a fresh start. Many legitimate interests have to be brought into balance. We want to live up to our values and at the same time face the challenges of a globalised world.

Europe has to move away from ad hoc solutions and put in place a predictable and reliable migration management system. I am convinced that the Commission's proposal is a good foundation for that. This Package reflects a fair and reasonable balance between responsibility and solidarity among Member States. We all share the benefits, we all share the burden. This Package also reflects a pragmatic and realistic approach. We know that we have to build trust between the Member States and citizens' confidence that we can manage this as a Union. The Package reflects the complexity of the issue as it brings together all aspects of migration: border management and screening, asylum and integration, return and relations with external partners.

And finally: The Commission's proposal builds on the different geographical situations, capabilities and choices of European Member States – but also takes into account that the pressure on our borders is varying. This results in a new balance between responsibility and solidarity. It is not a question whether Member States should support with solidarity and contributions, but how they should do it. Moria is a stark reminder: We need to find sustainable solutions on migration. And we all have to step up.

The European Commission is ready to step up as well. We want to provide rapid assistance. We will set up a joint pilot with the Greek authorities in Lesbos for the management of a reception centre. To implement this, we decided on the Task Force today. With the support of our EU agencies, this Task Force will help improve conditions for people on the island in a durable way. Together we have to show that Europe manages migration in a humane and effective way.

The EU has already proven in other areas that it can take extraordinary steps to reconcile diverging perspectives. We have created a complex Internal Market, a common currency and an unprecedented Recovery Plan to rebuild our economies. It is now time to rise to the challenge to manage migration jointly, with the right balance between solidarity and responsibility.

In a few minutes, Vice-President Schinas and Commissioner Johansson will present more detailed information on the Migration Package in the press room.

Thank you!

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