



Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Metsola and Belgian Prime Minister De Croo on the adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum

Brussels, 10 April 2024

Today is indeed a historic day. After years of intense work, the Pact on Migration and Asylum becomes a reality. It is a huge achievement for Europe. And this excellent achievement is built on the outstanding work of so many. So let me start by thanking Vice-President Schinas and Commissioner Johannsson for your amazing and tireless work. You and your teams have worked so hard over so many years to make this day happen. Dear Roberta, I also want to thank you and the European Parliament for your dedication and for the excellent cooperation. This was really amazing. And I want to thank the successive Council Presidencies, and I start with you, dear Alexander, the Belgian Presidency, who got us over the finish line. Thank you so much.

We all understand this fundamental truth. Migration is a European challenge which must be met with a European solution. One that is effective, and both fair and firm. This is what the Pact on Migration and Asylum delivers. It will be making a real difference for all Europeans. First, more secure European borders. Knowing exactly who crosses our borders, by registering and screening everyone, while ensuring the protection of fundamental rights through an independent monitoring. Second, faster, more efficient procedures for asylum and return. This means that those with no right to asylum will not be allowed to enter in the European Union, while those escaping war or persecution can count on the protection they need. The Pact strikes the right balance between stricter rules against the abuse of the system, and care for the most vulnerable. And third, more solidarity with the Member States at our external borders. Because they manage the pressure from illegal migration. So, all Member States will be part of this solidarity effort – but they will choose how best to do it. At the same time, secondary movements within the European Union cannot be allowed. The new rules foresee closer collaboration between Member States to stop secondary movements.

In essence, the Pact is about how best to pull our weight together. We will do it in a way that respects our obligation, as part of the international community, to support those with the right to international protection. We have fulfilled it in the past, and we will continue to do so. But we must be the ones to decide who comes to the European Union and under what circumstances, not the smugglers and traffickers.

With the Pact in place, we have the legal framework we need. This is one leg. The second leg is our operational support to Member States. We will continue to bring them tailored solutions on border management, the fight against smugglers, and returns. And we will continue to respond to crises, from Lampedusa to Finland's border, from the Canary Islands to Cyprus. In parallel, we will also press ahead with our work with global partners, developing partnerships with countries of origin and transit so that we can address the root causes of migration together. This engagement has become an essential pillar of our work. And it is delivering.

To conclude, I am proud to say: We delivered a European solution. But our work is not done yet. And it must be the same determination and unity that has led us to this day that has to guide us to make the Pact a true success in Europe.

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