EU Commission presents the Asylum and Migration Management Strategy

From the EU Commission press release:

"Today, the Commission is presenting the first European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy. It sets out the EU's political objectives on asylum and migration and will serve as a compass with concrete priorities for the next five years.

The EU has opened a new chapter on migration and asylum, building on and consolidating the substantial progress made in protecting our external borders, pursuing an assertive migration diplomacy, including our strategic and comprehensive partnerships with partner countries, and implementing the reforms brought by the Pact on Migration and Asylum. All these factors have contributed to a steady decrease of illegal migration and better migration management in recent years.

The Strategy reaffirms the Union's determination to put in place a framework that is fair and firm, and that effectively manages migration together with partner countries, delivering solutions while remaining true to European values. It asserts the principle that it is Europe that decides who comes to the EU, and under which circumstances.

The Strategy sets out the way forward to achieve three main objectives: to prevent illegal migration and break the business of criminal smuggling networks, to protect people fleeing war and persecution while preventing abuse of the system, and to attract talent to the EU to boost the competitiveness of our economies.

To achieve this, the Strategy focuses on five priorities:

Stepping up Migration Diplomacy
We will further reinforce an assertive migration diplomacy that promotes the EU's interests and values. Managing migration is a global challenge that requires us to work in solidarity while ensuring a fair-sharing of responsibility. The Commission will reinforce its efforts, together with Member States, to increase cooperation with international partners by:

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Promoting comprehensive and mutually beneficial partnerships that ensure an effective and rights-based cooperation on migration.
Using incentives and levers across sectors and policy areas such as visa policy, trade and financial support.
Implementing a whole-of-route approach that helps partners to build resilient and humane migration and asylum frameworks, including by providing protection closer to countries of origin. Multi-purpose centres along the routes can offer innovative ways to manage migration with partner countries.
Further stepping up the global fight against migrant smuggling to prevent dangerous journeys, including through the reinforced Global Alliance, new tools to track digital and illicit financial activities and a new sanctions regime.
Promoting pathways to protection and supporting returns from third countries, to help reduce pressure on partners and shield them from the abuses of smugglers.
Strong EU borders to enhance control and security
Strong EU borders that ensure effective control over who enters our Union are key for the EU's migration policy and for preserving the Schengen Area. To sustain and further step up the progress made so far, we will:

Deliver the world's most advanced digital border management system, with the roll-out of the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the launch of the new European Travel Information Authorisation System (ETIAS).
Screen all illegal arrivals to the Union and apply border procedures at our external borders under the Pact as of June this year.
Further strengthen the role of Frontex with a revision of its founding regulation.
A firm, fair and adaptable asylum and migration system
The Pact on Migration and Asylum is the bedrock of the EU's asylum and migration policy, ensuring stronger external border protection, strict rules against abuse and a balance between responsibility and solidarity. Its implementation, operationalisation and further development will require a continued focus in the next years. This includes:

Assisting national authorities in implementing the new rules with dedicated Commission country teams and additional €3 billion of funding to set up efficient procedures and better prevent unauthorised secondary movements.
Following the adoption of the first Solidarity Pool, ensuring continued solidarity for Member States under pressure.
Further strengthening and complementing the Pact to adapt to new challenges, e.g. with the amended safe third country concept, the EU list of safe countries of origin, and by exploring additional measures to introduce innovative aspects.

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More effective return and readmission
Fast, effective and dignified return is indispensable to the well-functioning and the credibility of our migration and asylum system. With currently only about a fourth of those ordered to leave actually returning, increasing the effectiveness of the EU's return system is urgent. To do so, we will further work on:

Building a common European system for return, based on the proposed Return Regulation, currently under negotiation, with more efficient rules, digitalised processes, and new innovative aspects such as the establishment of return hubs.
Improving readmission by third countries, by using and reinforcing the EU's toolbox to promote cooperation.
Labour and talent mobility to boost competitiveness
In the next five years, skills gaps and labour shortages will accentuate in many key sectors, also driven by demographic dynamics. The EU should aim to become the most attractive place in the global race for talent. For this, it will be necessary to:

Scale up existing and launch new Talent Partnerships and fully integrate talent acquisition into the EU's comprehensive cooperation with partner countries.
Simplify and accelerate the rules and the process to attract the skills Europe needs, including on the recognition and validation of qualifications and skills.
Fight illegal employment and exploitation of migrant workers and improve integration in host Member States, supported by EU funding.
The Strategy also promotes the full use of the potential of digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence in asylum and migration management, setting up this year a Forum on AI in migration. The objective is to provide Member States with modern, more secure and efficient tools to improve the quality, consistency and timeliness of decision-making, as well as enhance security, while improving services for people.

To support the implementation of this Strategy, the Union will make strategic use of Union funding as set out in the Commission's proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034. This includes a proposal to dedicate an overall amount of at least €81 billion to home affairs policies and a Global Europe instrument, designed to match a more strategic approach to international partnerships, in alignment with the EU's strategic interests, including on migration. EU Agencies will provide reinforced operational support to Member States.

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All actions under the Strategy are rooted in the respect of fundamental rights in accordance with the Charter and align with our international obligations.

Background

The Asylum and Migration Management Regulation requires Member States to have national strategies in place to ensure their capacity to effectively implement their asylum and migration management systems. It also requires the Commission to draw up a long-term European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy setting out the strategic approach to ensure the consistent implementation of national strategies at Union level.
The Strategy takes into account the views expressed by the European Parliament, the Member States, and various stakeholders, including the expertise of the EU Agencies."

Source(s)

- European Commission (29 January, 2026), [Commission presents a five-year strategy on migration], https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-presents-five-year-strategy-migration-2026-01-29_en
- European Commission (29 January, 2026), [Press release: Commission presents a five-year strategy on migration], https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_233

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