

An open letter to negotiators in the European Commission, the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament ahead of the final negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration

We are writing as concerned human rights defenders, and as people who see and work with the stark consequences of political choices.

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum will mirror the failed approaches of the past and worsen their consequences. There is currently a major risk that the Pact results in an ill-functioning, costly, and cruel system that falls apart on implementation and leaves critical issues unaddressed.

If adopted in its current format, it will normalise the arbitrary use of immigration detention, including for children and families, increase racial profiling, use “crisis” procedures to enable pushbacks, and return individuals to so called “safe third countries” where they are at risk of violence, torture, and arbitrary imprisonment.

It also betrays the spirit of existing EU work, such as the EU Action Plan on Integration and the EU Action Plan Against Racism which recognises the intersectional impacts of racism and the specific vulnerability of migrants and refugees. The Pact, as it stands, risks perpetuating discriminatory practices within the very structures meant to uphold justice and protection for all.

We are acutely aware that politics is often about compromise. But there are exceptions, and human rights cannot be compromised. When they are weakened, there are consequences for all of us.

Rather than channelling funding towards more camps, walls, and surveillance, resources should go towards providing effective solutions, based on protection and assistance, of the kind offered to people fleeing Ukraine. Europe's solidarity and commitment to human rights cannot be defined by place of origin, race, ethnicity, or immigration status.

We should strengthen, not weaken, our reception and asylum systems and provide mechanisms to fairly share responsibility between European states. We need support for - not restrictions on - rescuing people at sea. We need more, not less, access to legal aid, asylum, medical and social support for people in need. We need real accountability for border forces that violate our laws. And we need more safe routes for people to move, work and settle in safety and dignity.

We have recently witnessed a dignified and compassionate response to displacement with the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive. This stands as a testament to the principles of human rights and protection that should guide our collective approach to these reforms. The New Pact must reflect and build upon this dignified response rather than leading Europe in the opposite direction.

There are times when political choices can make a profound difference, for better or for worse, to people's lives. Today is one such time. We're asking you to show leadership for the just and compassionate Europe we all want to live in.

Sincerely,

ActionAid International
Amnesty International
Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI)
Balkanbrücke
Be Aware And Share (BAAS)
Birlikte Yaşamak İstiyoruz İnisiyatifi / We Want to Live Together Initiative
The Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)
Caritas Europa
Centre for Legal Aid "Voice in Bulgaria"
Civil initiative Infokolpa
CNCD - 11.11.11.
Collective Aid
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)
Divest Borders
Dokustelle
Equal Legal Aid
Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice
Europe Cares
European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH)
EuroMed Rights
European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
European Network on Religion and Belief (ENORB)
Generation for Change CY
Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM)
Grenzenlose Wärme - Refugee Relief Work e.V.
Habibi.Works (Soup and Socks, e.V.)
I Have Rights
Intereuropean Human Aid Association Germany e.V.
International Rescue Committee
Ivorian Community of Greece
JRS Europe
KISA - Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism
La Cimade
Legal Centre Lesbos
Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH)
Love Without Borders
Media and Migration Association (MMA)
Migrants Organise
Migrant Voice
Mobile Info Team
NLA (Northern Lights Aid)

Oxfam
Pikett Asyl
Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
ReFOCUS Media Labs
Refugee Legal Support (RLS)
Refugees in Libya
Revibra Europe
Samos Volunteers
Save the Children
SIEMPRE Belgium
SOLIDAR
S.P.E.A.K (Muslim Women Collective NL)
Voices of International Students (VOIS Cyprus)
Women's Healthcare on the Move
Yoga and Sport with Refugees