

Outsourcing borders

Monitoring EU externalisation policy

Bulletin 8
1 July 2025

“We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe. Europe now lives at such a mad, reckless pace that she has shaken off all guidance and all reason, and she is running headlong into the abyss; we would do well to avoid it with all possible speed.”

Frantz Fanon

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Thematic and regional developments

Official EU documents summarised here, and those published with previous editions of the bulletin, are contained in our [document archive](#).

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Border management

Stronger migration control role for EU foreign security and defence missions in the works

A [Polish Presidency document dated 10 June](#) (pdf) “analyses the role of selected civilian CSDP [Common Security and Defence Policy] missions in addressing migration-related challenges along key routes to the EU, highlighting concrete contributions and lessons learned for future EU engagement.”

The Presidency’s paper is framed by the EU’s recent ‘ProtectEU’ internal security strategy, which also focuses on the “external dimension” of security. It was circulated for discussion at the [EMWP meeting on 18 June](#).

The paper refers to the EU’s CSDP missions in Niger (currently on hold following the 2023 military coup), Mali, Libya, Ukraine and Iraq. The mandate of each of these missions was amended in recent years to also cover migration and “border management” issues. The Presidency raises the question of how the missions could better monitor “migratory flows” towards the EU.

It is noteworthy there is only one proposal for a mission to “consider how it can best support the safe and efficient movement of people” – the CSDP mission in Ukraine.

“Significant progress” in implementing Pact on Migration and Asylum, says European Commission

On 11 June, the European Commission published a [report](#) on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The Commission argues that “significant progress” has been made since June last year, when the new laws were agreed, but “further efforts are required to address remaining challenges.” The new laws are supposed to be in place by June 2026.

Budgets and funding



EU member states want more money for migration control in post-2028 budget

EU member states are gearing up for the publication of the proposal for the 2028-35 EU budget, which is expected on 16 July. A [recent paper circulated by the Polish Presidency](#) (pdf) examines the current budgets available for external migration control projects, and summarises high-level discussions in the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA).

The summary of the SCIFA discussion indicates a range of different priorities:

- member states want “new sources of funding to finance strategic and comprehensive partnerships (SCPs)”;
- some want “a Team Europe approach, which would allow for better coordination between the EU and national funds”;
- “several Member States called for an increase of funds available for migration under the new MFF,” for topics including “the external dimension, the Mediterranean, SCPs, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, return and readmission, but also the so-called innovative solutions”

Spending is currently higher than anticipated, at least in relation to the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE), the EU’s €80 billion aid budget.

At least 10% of the funds should be spent on migration-related projects. The document notes that “until now on average the spending has been of around 14%.”

The document also discusses “lessons learnt” from a 2024 review of the current budgets, which run from 2021-27, and asks a number of questions to delegations to inform future discussions.

The document was discussed by the [EMWP on 18 June](#).



Member states discuss Migration Pact’s “solidarity contributions”

The new Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, approved last year, will put a range of new bodies and tools at the disposal of EU member states. These include a “permanent EU Migration Support Toolbox” that will provide [new means for the externalisation of EU migration and border controls](#).

These include “solidarity contributions,” to be made from one or several member states to another that is facing “migratory pressure.” Those contributions can involve relocating

refugees (for example, from Greece to Germany), as well as “financial contributions, alternative measures or a combination thereof.”

A [Polish Presidency note from the beginning of June](#) (pdf) highlights that financial contributions should “mainly” support actions in a member state facing “migratory pressure.” They can also, however, “be used for projects in or in relation to third countries that might have a direct impact on the migratory flows at the external borders or improve the asylum and migration situation in the third country concerned.”

The Presidency’s note describes the administrative and financial mechanisms being set up to manage the contributions. It ends with questions to member states, asking how their internal decision-making procedures will work, and what they will find most “challenging” about “planning, pledging and implementing your potential financial contributions and alternative solidarity measures.”

The document was discussed by the [Asylum Working Party on 10 June](#) (pdf)



European Commission makes €28 million available for border security technology research

The European Commission has [announced](#) a total pot of €28 million for new security research projects on the “effective management of EU borders.” The funding is part of a larger €250 million tranche of security research funding.

The Commission is seeking projects dealing with:

- “efficient border surveillance and maritime security”;
- “secured and facilitated crossing of external borders”; and
- “better customs and supply chain security.”

Deportation and readmission

EU should label “categories” of third countries as safe, Polish Presidency proposes

EU member states have begun discussing a proposal to establish an EU list of “safe countries of origin.” The list would make it possible to put asylum-seekers from so-called “safe” countries through accelerated asylum procedures with reduced safeguards, [“on the basis that their claims are unlikely to be successful.”](#)

A [document circulated by the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU on 4 June](#) (pdf) makes a first set of proposed amendments to the Commission’s proposal. The most substantial change is for the EU to be able to designate not just a particular country as “safe”, but a “category of third countries” as well.

There is no further explanation in the document as to what constitutes a “category” of countries, nor how that designation would be agreed. The Presidency maintains the Commission’s proposed [list](#) (pdf) of seven “safe” countries:

- Bangladesh
- Colombia
- Egypt
- India
- Kosovo
- Morocco
- Tunisia

In addition, all EU candidate countries are to be automatically considered as safe, unless certain circumstances change. The proposal will be subject to further discussion within the Council, and also has to be agreed with the European Parliament. Within the Council, it is being discussed in the Asylum Working Party.

Italy not responsible for ‘pullbacks’ to Libya, court rules

On 20 May, [the European Court of Human Rights ruled](#) that a case regarding a 2017 ‘pullback’ operation by the so-called Libyan coast guard was inadmissible. The applicants to the court had argued that Italy exercised extraterritorial jurisdiction due to its funding and technical support for the Libyan authorities.

As the de:border collective, one of the organisations that helped bring the case, [put it](#):

“[The court stated] that the financial and technical support provided by Italy to the Libyan Government of National Accord under bilateral agreements was not such as to lead the Court to presume that the Libyan authorities were dependent to such a degree that the international maritime area off the Libyan coast was under the

effective control and decisive influence of Italy—contrary to findings from the Italian judiciary that Libyan Coastguard interventions in the Central Mediterranean happen ‘under the aegis of the Italian navy’.”

Violeta Moreno-Lax of the de:border collective said that the pullback policy:

“...is an artifice specifically designed as a mechanism to evade human rights responsibility, while still maintaining a form of ‘contactless control’ over migrants and refugees attempting to reach safety by sea. It constitutes a form of ‘refoulement by proxy’ that contravenes the most essential foundations of the Convention system and that this judgment will apparently allow to continue”.”

“A return journey can be a new beginning”: Frontex holds second “reintegration” conference

In June, Frontex hosted its second annual Reintegration Conference in Rotterdam. A [news article published by the agency](#) said: “Reintegration means helping returnees rebuild their lives back home, whether it’s support to find housing, launch a business, or access healthcare or training. It’s about turning return into a real opportunity.”

The conference demonstrates the agency’s growing role in implementing the EU’s reintegration policies, a topic explored in [a previous Statewatch analysis](#), and news articles in [January](#) and [February](#).

Migration partnerships

Italy demands “renewed reflection” on how Libya can control migration for the EU

A [document circulated by the Italian delegation](#) to the Council of the EU on 5 June calls for “renewed reflection at ministerial level on how to respond to the current situation,” with an “even more unstable” situation in Libya. This presents “a concrete risk that ongoing efforts and cooperation between Libya and the European Union in the field of migration management could be jeopardised,” says the document.

The document makes no proposals, aside from calling for a ministerial discussion, which took place at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 13 June. The [press release from that meeting](#) offers no details, merely saying: “When discussing the external dimension of migration, ministers also touched upon the situation in Libya and its consequences for migratory flows towards Europe.”

“Intensifying operational and strategic cooperation with partner countries”: member states seek to step up work of immigration liaison officers

The EU maintains a network of immigration liaison officers, posted to countries abroad to gather information on migration patterns, assist with organising deportations, and discussing legal migration with host country authorities, amongst other things.

However, “progress towards a fully operational ILO Network remains limited,” according to a [recent document circulated to member states by the General Secretariat of the Council](#) (pdf). It notes that the Polish Presidency:

“...considers it necessary and timely to hold a strategic exchange among the EMWP delegates on the ILO Network’s role in intensifying operational and strategic cooperation with partner countries, with particular emphasis on the external dimension of migration.”

The document urges member states to find candidates for vacant EU migration liaison officer posts (in Bangladesh, Mali, Morocco, Sudan, The Gambia, Tunisia and Türkiye). It also lists the locations of Frontex’s liaison officers:

- Ankara (covering Türkiye);
- Belgrade (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia);
- Tirana (Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia);
- Dakar (Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia);
- Chisinau (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine);
- Islamabad (Pakistan);
- Rabat (Morocco).

The document calls for increased information-sharing “for early warning purposes.” It says that “Frontex and Europol could play a greater role in this regard.” Member states are invited to offer their views on:

- how ILOs can be used to enhance “the EU’s external migration management”;
- how ILO activities can “be better integrated with other EU external migration instruments”;
- which other non-EU states EMLOs should be deployed to, beyond the current list.

The document was discussed by the [EMWP on 18 June](#).



New EU migration “action files” on Ethiopia, Somalia and Jordan

EU and member state officials are working on a new “action file” on Ethiopia and Somalia, according to an April agenda of the [Operational Coordination Mechanism on the External Dimension of Migration \(MOCADDEM\)](#).

MOCADDEM action files are designed to guide coordinated action and messaging by EU member states and institutions in discussions on migration with other states – in this case, Ethiopia and Somalia. The new action file comes after the Polish Presidency [proposed in February](#) (pdf) to create “an action file on the Horn of Africa region, covering notable Ethiopia and Somalia.”

The February document also proposes a “new action file on Jordan that could be presented to MOCADDEM in April,” due to the EU signing a “Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership” with the kingdom. Jordan is mentioned in a [MOCADDEM agenda for 7 April](#) (pdf), alongside Tunisia, Mauritania and Egypt.



Frontex failing to prevent illegal expulsions from Albania and North Macedonia, report warns

In its [twelfth annual report](#), Frontex’s Consultative Forum on fundamental rights criticises the treatment of migrants and refugees by the authorities in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, all states where Frontex has operations in place.

The report notes that in Albania, “unaccompanied children are not directed to the national child protection unit, and in reception centres, they share accommodation with adults, which is not in line with child protection standards.”

Frontex staff in Albania need an “update” to their “knowledge on the identification of trafficking in human beings,” the report says. It also calls for Frontex to prevent illegal expulsions by the Albanian authorities, described as “instances in which people were returned to Greece without removal orders.”

In North Macedonia, the Forum found that migrants housed in the Vinojug Temporary Transit Centre are “de facto detained, without being provided with proper information and

documentation.” There were also “indications that on some occasions, informal returns to Greece occurred.” The centre itself is described as “a hazard for the wellbeing of both migrants and staff operating within the facility.”

In Serbia, members of the Forum “observed insufficient access to basic services such as food, water and clothing at reception points”.



New report on Algeria’s role in the European border regime

A [new report](#) analyses the Algerian government's involvement in border and immigration control projects promoted and funded by European governments, as well as by the Arab League.

This represents a marked shift from the past, when the country "was considered extremely reluctant to formally integrate into the European border regime, near-consistently refusing to take part in Europe-funded ‘border management’ projects," the report notes.



Expanded Frontex operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the way

On 12 June, the European Commission [signed](#) a new agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina on Frontex operations in the country. The agreement is based on the expanded mandate of the 2019 Frontex Regulation and replaces a previous agreement based on the 2016 Frontex Regulation.

The agreement means Frontex will be able to “to carry out joint operations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and deploy its standing corps anywhere along the country’s borders, including on the borders with neighbouring non-EU countries, as well as at border crossing points including airports.” Previously, operations were restricted to borders with EU states.



European Parliament discusses human rights aspects of EU’s “Memoranda of Understanding” with Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan

On 25 June, the European Parliament’s human rights sub-committee was due to hold a [public hearing](#) on “the human rights dimension of the EU Memoranda of Understanding in its South neighbourhood (Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan with a focus on the use of EU funds).”

At the time of writing this bulletin, the meeting had not yet taken place and no detailed agenda was available. Lawyers for the Parliament have [previously criticised the EU-Tunisia agreement](#), arguing that it requires democratic oversight despite its legally non-binding nature.

A recent [statement](#) by Tunisian activists condemned the EU’s relationship with Tunisia, noting that faced with people seeking safety and protection, “Europe raises its shields and

pushes its borders southward, outsourcing the brutal management of a racist and inhumane deportation process. Hence, every violation is permitted — even funded.”

The same countries were up for discussion at a [MOCADÉM meeting on 17 April](#) (pdf), though no further details of that discussion have been made public.



UK and Morocco commit to “strengthened security cooperation” on “illegal migration”

The UK and Morocco recently agreed to “strengthened security cooperation in counterterrorism, illegal migration and serious organised crime will enhance mutual resilience from these threats”. This cooperation “will be underpinned by an agreed information and intelligence exchange,” says a statement published following [a meeting](#) that saw the two countries enter into an “Enhanced Strategic Partnership.”



EU and US “reaffirm” the “strong transatlantic partnership,” including on “irregular migration”

On 2 and 3 June an [EU-US justice and home affairs ministerial meeting](#) took place in Warsaw. Irregular migration was one of the topics of discussion, at a time when the Trump administration is encouraging and committing flagrant violations of the law and human rights abuses as part of its “mass deportations” agenda. The Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, which hosted the meeting, has published no details of what was discussed.

Other

Frontex director stokes fears of Sahel states “instrumentalising” migration

Frontex’s director, Hans Leijtens, has asserted that political shifts in the Sahel region “raises fears that migration flows across the Mediterranean could be instrumentalised to put further pressure on the EU.”

The statement comes in his [foreword to the agency’s annual risk analysis report](#). No evidence is presented to back up the claim other than “Russia’s growing influence in the region and its military foothold in Eastern Libya.”

Whether or not Leijtjen’s claim has any basis in reality, the EU is not held in particularly high standing in the region. As a recent [op-ed in EUobserver](#) put it:

“The reputational damage done to the EU in the Global South through its links to torture, slavery, violence, and death in Libya is not easily recoverable. And sadly, the Libyan story is not a one-off experience but reflected in a wider foreign policy approach.”

Schengen Area 40th anniversary statement includes commitment to externalisation

12 June marked the 40th anniversary of the Schengen area. In a [statement](#) to commemorate the signing of the first Schengen agreement in 1985, EU and Schengen states issued a statement that included a commitment to border externalisation:

“We will reinforce the external dimension of Schengen through a comprehensive approach, including an effective visa policy, border management and effective cooperation with third countries on return and readmission, with the aim of fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.”

UK plans to introduce visa sanctions, mimicking EU approach

UK prime minister, Keir Starmer, has [said](#) that the government is examining whether to “tie our visas to the work that the countries we’re dealing with are doing on preventive measures and on return agreements.” This would appear to be adopting [the EU’s approach](#), by which it restricts Schengen visas for citizens of countries deemed insufficiently cooperative with deportations.

Starmer’s announcement came after the foreign secretary, David Lammy, said in [a recent speech](#) that states who do not “step up on irregular migration” in their cooperation with the UK will face “consequences.” He did not offer any detail on what those consequences might

be. There has been no concrete plan announced with regard to the more “transactional” use of visas referred to by Starmer.



EU agrees revised visa suspension mechanism

On 17 June a “provisional political agreement” was [reached](#) by the European Parliament and Council of the EU on a revised visa suspension mechanism. The law deals with the suspension of visa-free travel from countries that do not meet certain conditions.

Previously, those conditions included “sudden and substantial increase in irregular migration, lack of readmission cooperation, or security risks.” Under the new law they will also include “insufficient alignment with the EU’s visa policy, hybrid threats, the operation of investor citizenship schemes, and the deterioration of the external relations between the EU and visa-free non-EU countries.”



Rabat Process holds meeting on missing migrants

On 9 and 10 July, the Rabat Process will host a [meeting](#) on “Advancing cooperation on Missing Migrants in the Rabat Process Region.” The meeting will “focus on identifying and promoting concrete policy and operational measures to prevent the tragedy of missing migrants, enhance the search for and identification of missing persons, and provide meaningful support to the families and communities affected.”

Updates to the document archive

The [Outsourcing Borders document archive](#) hosts key documents from the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

External Aspects of Asylum and Migration Working Party (EMWP)

[Making the best use of the financial framework for enhancing comprehensive cooperation on the external dimension of migration and asylum](#) (9372/25, LIMITE, 12 June 2025, pdf)

[Strengthening the role of the European network of immigration liaison officers in intensifying operational and strategic cooperation with partner countries](#) (9374/25, LIMITE, 11 June 2025, pdf)

[Optimising cooperation along migratory routes and strengthening the EU's comprehensive approach to building security in partner countries: contribution from CSDP missions](#) (9375/25, LIMITE, 10 June 2025, pdf)

Operational Coordination Mechanism on the External Dimension of Migration (MOCADDEM)

[Agenda of the MOCADDEM Roundtable on 17 April 2025](#) (WK 4679/2025 INIT, pdf)

[Agenda of the MOCADDEM Roundtable on 7 April 2025](#) (WK 3391/2025 INIT, pdf)

[MOCADDEM Roundtable - presentation by the Commission on the NDICI-GE website](#) (WK 4345/2025 INIT, 7 April 2025, LIMITE, pdf)

[Agenda of the MOCADDEM Roundtable on 17 February 2025](#) (WK 893/2025 INIT, pdf)

[Follow-up to the COREPER discussion on the working methods of MOCADDEM](#) (WK 1200/2025 INIT, LIMITE, 11 February 2025, pdf)

Other documents

Note from Italian delegation: [External dimension of migration – Libya](#) (9744/25, LIMITE, 5 June 2025, pdf)

Note from Presidency: [Implementation of solidarity contributions – discussion paper](#) (9363/25, LIMITE, 4 June 2025, pdf)

Presidency compromise text: [Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1348 as regards the establishment of a list of safe countries of origin at Union level- Amended Presidency compromise text](#) (9362/25, LIMITE, 4 June 2025, pdf) and Annex: [List of safe countries](#) (pdf)

About this bulletin

This project, carried out by *Statewatch* and *migration-control.info* and funded by *Brot für die Welt*, *Misereor*, *medico international* and *Pro Asyl*, aims to make the EU's externalisation policies, plans and practices public. In doing so it seeks to highlight their impact on the rights of people on the move, as well as democratic standards, transparency and accountability. It addresses a lack of public information by publishing relevant EU documents, in this phase primarily those produced or discussed by the Council of the EU. It also tackles the overflow of information that results from a variety of EU institutions, working groups and national governments involved in the externalisation agenda by summarising thematic and regional developments, and by analysing key issues in depth.