

# THE EU'S NEW PACT ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM: A THIN LINE BETWEEN SOLIDARITY AND LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY

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## The EU's new Pact on Migration and Asylum: A thin line between solidarity and limited responsibility

*“In recent years, Europe has been called on to respond to pressures at its borders, from Lampedusa to Poland’s border with Belarus, from the borders of the Baltic states and Finland to the Canary Islands, Cyprus and beyond.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Abstract:** *The EU’s new Pact on Migration and Asylum is a long-awaited agreement meant to establish a common asylum system with standard procedures, and mitigate the migratory pressures in the front-line states of the European Union. Several regulations of this legislative package seem to blemish the EU’s reputation as a protector and promoter of human rights. The present paper contextualizes the adoption of this double-edged pact and presents its positive and controversial aspects while stressing how difficult it is nowadays for a supranational organisation like the EU to strike the right balance between its internal and external responsibilities.*

**Keywords:** *European Union, irregular migration, common asylum system, populism.*

**Abstract:** *Noul Pact al UE privind migrația și azilul reprezintă un acord mult așteptat menit să stabilească un sistem comun de azil cu proceduri standard și să reducă presiunile migrației în statele Uniunii Europene din prima linie. Unele dintre reglementările incluse în acest pachet legislativ par să afecteze reputația UE ca protector și promotor al drepturilor omului. Lucrarea de față contextualizează adoptarea pactului și prezintă atât aspectele sale pozitive, cât și pe cele controversate, subliniind cât de dificil este în zilele noastre pentru o organizație supranațională precum UE să atingă echilibrul corect între responsabilitățile sale interne și externe.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Uniunea Europeană, migrație ilegală, sistem comun de azil, populism.*

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<sup>1</sup> von der Leyen, Ursula, (2024). *Europe’s Choice. Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029*, Strasbourg, July 18, p. 16. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648\\_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029\\_EN.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf). Accessed on: November 1, 2024.

This policy brief seeks to highlight that, sometimes, hard times call for strict measures, which are unpopular or controversial, like the EU's new Pact on Migration and Asylum. The European Union, which promotes and protects human rights and is among the largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide<sup>2</sup>, is about to turn into a fortress to protect itself from migratory waves. Its restrictive policies and harsh measures “are considered by civil society organisations as a step backwards in the EU's course as an international normative power”<sup>3</sup>. And yet, do EU leaders really have a choice?

The shock waves of the crises that hit the European Union during the last decades (*the security crisis in the wake of the terrorist attacks, the economic crisis, the migration crisis, the pandemic crisis, the energy crisis, the climate crisis with its devastating extreme events, and the current security conundrum triggered by the wars in EU's neighbourhood*) are still felt by the less fortunate in the EU Member States, afflicted by the rising inequalities and the dim prospects of a better future. The populists can easily exploit their discontent and the feelings of insecurity generated by real or imaginary threats, and populism may endanger the European project designed to ensure peace and prosperity.

Migration – in particular the irregular one – remains a sensitive issue in our part of the world. Hence, it is natural to wonder if it is a real or an imaginary threat nowadays. In our view, it can be both. It depends on the numbers. It can be instrumentalised to destabilise Europe<sup>4</sup>, or it can be useful to solve the labour market shortages<sup>5</sup>. In 2023, according to data provided by Frontex, the number of irregular arrivals at the EU's external borders reached

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<sup>2</sup> Dyvik, E.H., (2024). “Largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide in 2023 (in million U.S. dollars), by country”, Statista, July 4. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/275597/largest-donor-countries-of-aid-worldwide/>. Accessed on: October 23, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Pérez, A., (2020). “Fortress Europe: an authoritarian-populist construct?”, Elcano Royal Institute, October 30, p.1. Available at: <https://media.realinstitutoelcano.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ari122-2020-perez-fortress-europe-an-authoritarian-populist-construct.pdf>. Accessed on: October 23, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Rasche, L., (2022). “The instrumentalisation of migration – how should the EU respond?”, Hertie School/Jacques Delors Centre, December 16. Available at: <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/the-instrumentalisation-of-migration>. Accessed on: September 29, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, (2024). “Tackling labour and skills shortages in the EU”, March 20. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/news/tackling-labour-and-skills-shortages-eu-2024-03-20\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/news/tackling-labour-and-skills-shortages-eu-2024-03-20_en). Accessed on: September 20, 2024. Mehta, R., and Uniyal, M., (2024). “Severe skill shortage in Europe: Can India be the answer?”, *Financial Express*, May 25. Available at: <https://www.financialexpress.com/jobs-career/severe-skill-shortage-in-europe-can-india-be-the-answer-3501083/>. Accessed on: September 27, 2024.

“the highest level since 2016”, 380.000 people, most of whom were Syrians, Guineans and Afghans<sup>6</sup>.

However, the EU’s new *Pact on Migration and Asylum* does not tackle all the aspects of migration. It opens the doors of the European Union only to those entitled to international protection and therefore eligible for asylum. Thus, it leaves outside its scope the economic migrants. It does not include policies that might attract skilled or highly qualified migrants for specific sectors or industries<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, it does suggest that legal migration should be stimulated by EU Talent Partnerships<sup>8</sup>. Yet, in a timely policy brief, Judith Kohlenberger, Associated Policy Fellow at Jacques Delors Centre, argues that the EU is not the most appealing destination for highly qualified migrants<sup>9</sup>.

Adopted in the European Parliament on April 10, 2024, with 322 votes in favour (cast mainly by MEPs from the centre-right EPP, centre-left S&D, and Renew), and 266 against<sup>10</sup>, the new *Pact on Migration and Asylum* is the result of four years of consultations and negotiations on the new set of regulations proposed by the Commission in the fall of 2020 to reform the EU’s asylum system so as to create “a truly unified European system with clear rules for everybody”<sup>11</sup>.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated that this pact represents a “huge achievement for Europe”. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sees it as a “historic, indispensable step”. The European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, thinks it “will be able to better protect our external borders”. The former Minister of Migration and Asylum of the Hellenic Republic, Dimitris Kairidis, considers it “a major

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<sup>6</sup> Frontex, (2024). “Significant rise in irregular border crossings in 2023, highest since 2016”, January 26. Available at: [https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/significant-rise-in-irregular-border-crossings-in-2023-highest-since-2016-C0gGpm?etrans=fr&utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/significant-rise-in-irregular-border-crossings-in-2023-highest-since-2016-C0gGpm?etrans=fr&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email). Accessed on: October 23, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> González Enríquez, C., (2024). “The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: context, challenges and limitations”, Elcano Royal Institute, May 28, p. 2. Available at: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-eu-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-context-challenges-and-limitations/>. Accessed on July 16, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Kohlenberger, J., (2024). “Opening up ‘Fortress Europe’ to Global Talents: EU Labour Migration Options”, Hertie School/ Jacques Delors Centre, February 7. Available at: <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/detail/publication/opening-up-fortress-europe-to-global-talents-eu-labour-migration-options>. Accessed on: September 29, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Stamatoukou, E., (2024). “European Parliament Adopts Migration and Asylum Pact Despite Criticism”, *Balkan Insight*, April 11. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/04/11/european-parliament-adopts-migration-and-asylum-pact-despite-criticism/>. Accessed on: July 17, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, (2024). “Managing migration responsibly”, July 9. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/story-von-der-leyen-commission/managing-migration-responsibly\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/story-von-der-leyen-commission/managing-migration-responsibly_en). Accessed on: September 1, 2024.

breakthrough” that facilitates a joint European approach “of the migration challenges of our time”<sup>12</sup>, etc.

The need for such a reform was unquestionable in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis, as EU Member States have been unevenly affected by this phenomenon and the Southern states of the Union have therefore pleaded for a more equitable burden-sharing. As expected, in recent years, asylum and related issues (the monitoring and control of EU borders, the resettlement of asylum seekers, the repatriation of migrants, etc.) have been at the top of the agenda of EU Council meetings<sup>13</sup>.

The new *Pact on Migration and Asylum* is made up of several regulations, supposed to take effect in June 2026:

- **The Screening Regulation** introduces uniform procedures for identity, health, vulnerability, and security checks. It also allows the detainment for a period of up to 12 weeks of those considered “a security risk”.
- **The EURODAC Regulation**, the fingerprint database, is designed to monitor immigrants in the Schengen area and discourage them from applying for asylum in more than one country. This “will be upgraded to a biometric database that will be shared online using the EES (Entry Exit System)”.
- **The Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR)**. This implies a solidarity mechanism that cannot be circumvented. Each EU Member State must accept an annual quota of asylum applicants, or pay €20,000 for each asylum seeker it rejects, or allocate the same amount for “immigration-related projects in the countries of origin” or for the repatriation of applicants who are not granted asylum, or offer technical means or deploy staff where needed (e.g., in the host countries). “The regulation stipulates that at least 30,000 people should be resettled every year, normally from Member States with external borders (basically the Mediterranean countries) to the rest”. The distribution procedure of asylum applicants will take into account the population and GDP of each EU Member State.
- **The Common Asylum Procedure** permits the deportation of asylum seekers to a “safe third country”<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> France 24, (2024). “EU parliament adopts stricter migration rules in landmark asylum reform”, April 10. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240410-eu-parliament-vote-stricter-migration-rules-landmark-asylum-reform>. Accessed on: September 1, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> González Enríquez, C., *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

- **The Asylum Procedure Regulation** includes the Return Border Procedure Regulation.
- **The Qualification Procedure** embeds the Geneva Convention into the EU law. It is meant to ensure that Member States use “common criteria to qualify persons as beneficiaries of international protection”.
- **The Crisis and Force Majeure Regulation.** This regulation enhances the burden-sharing measures in situations of asylum crisis and/or *force majeure* and allows certain derogations from the rules encompassed in the asylum *acquis*.
- **The revised Reception Conditions Directive** aims to ensure minimum standards of assistance for asylum applicants by the Member States, including appropriate living conditions for refugees.
- **The Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation** is designed to promote and strengthen safe and legal pathways to the EU for refugees and asylum seekers. It also aims to enhance international partnerships that facilitate the resettlement of asylum seekers in non-EU countries<sup>15</sup>.

The Council of the European Union approved the negotiating mandates for the first two aforementioned regulations in June 2022, and an overall agreement on the reform of the EU’s asylum and migration system was reached by the Council and the European Parliament in December 2023<sup>16</sup>. These regulations cannot come into effect immediately because a preparation period is required for building the border infrastructure and ensuring the necessary administrative procedures. In the meantime, the European Commission will discuss and negotiate with the Member States the details of the implementation of this pact, underlines Carmen González Enríquez, senior analyst at Elcano Royal Institute<sup>17</sup>.

On June 12, 2024, the Commission proposed a Common Implementation Plan that sets forth the milestones the Member States should reach to apply successfully the new legislation by mid-2026. This will serve as a basis for the elaboration of the Member States’ National Implementation Plans, which should be submitted by December 2024.

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission/ Migration and Home Affairs, (2024). “Legislative files in a nutshell. Pact on Migration and Asylum”, June 4. Available at: [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum/legislative-files-nutshell\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum/legislative-files-nutshell_en). Accessed on: September 1, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Council of the European Union, 2024. *Timeline – Migration and Asylum Pact*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/eu-migration-asylum-reform-pact/timeline-migration-and-asylum-pact/>. Accessed on: October 31, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> González Enríquez, C., *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.



Additionally, the Commission concluded global partnerships with Tunisia, Egypt, and Mauritania that aim to improve the migration management and the security of Europe<sup>18</sup>. The 7.4-billion-euro deal concluded with Egypt relieved, for instance, Gavdos, a tiny Greek island with meagre means and inhabited by less than 70 people, from the recent migration inflows that its authorities could not cope with<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, in her *Political Guidelines*, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, suggested that the EU should “show no tolerance” to “hostile actors” who instrumentalise migration to endanger its security<sup>20</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the new *Pact on Migration and Asylum* will be difficult to implement due to its dependence on agreements with third-party countries that should be embedded in EU’s foreign policy, as well as due to its complexity<sup>21</sup>, controversial aspects, and the need to dismantle the ‘hydra-headed’ smuggling networks. Though officially hailed as a great achievement, it has raised various concerns mainly among pundits, and human rights organisations (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, etc.)<sup>22</sup>, or NGOs specialised in helping undocumented migrants (e.g., PICUM), but also among officials in the front-line states. Despite the optimistic rhetoric, claiming that this pact will “manage migration responsibly”<sup>23</sup>, increasing challenges lie ahead (owing to the situation in the Global South and the ongoing wars, and also due to the fact that Europe is still perceived as an El Dorado<sup>24</sup>) and those dealing with them are not impressed by sugar-coated facts.

The new Pact will certainly not decrease pressure on the first-entry states (basically, the Med-5: Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, and Spain), whose officials, during a mini-summit held in the Canary Islands, labelled the pact “the lowest common denominator” that may

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<sup>18</sup> European Commission, “Managing migration responsibly”, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Smith, H., (2024). “‘Pushed to the limit’: the tiny Greek island in people smugglers’ sight”, *The Guardian*, March 27. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/27/how-people-smugglers-set-sights-on-tiny-greek-island-gavdos>. Accessed on: September 1, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> von der Leyen, Ursula, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> González Enríquez, C., *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Genovese, V., (2024). “Ylva Johansson says Europe's new migration pact is 'a huge achievement'”, *Euronews*, April 12. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2024/04/12/ylva-johansson-says-europes-new-migration-pact-is-a-huge-achievement>. Accessed on: July 17, 2024. Henley, J., (2024). “EU asylum and migration pact has passed despite far right and left’s objections”, *The Guardian*, April 10. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/10/eu-asylum-and-migration-pact-has-passed-despite-far-right-and-lefts-objections>. Accessed on: September 10, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, “Managing migration responsibly”, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> De Clerk, H.M-L, (2015). “Europe is no longer the only ‘El Dorado’ for sub-Saharan Africans: the case of contemporary Senegalese migration to Turkey”, *Migration and Development*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 272-290. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1080/21632324.2015.1022086>. Accessed on: October 23, 2024.

enable “progress in the right direction”<sup>25</sup>. This pact will widen their responsibilities and augment their workload with the screening procedures (that have to be completed in a maximum of seven days) and the management of the inflows and outflows at the border facilities, as Lilian Tsourdi, Associate Professor and Jean Monnet Chair in EU Migration Law and Governance (Maastricht University), pointed out during a hybrid conference organised by the European Policy Centre in March 2024<sup>26</sup>.

Moreover, as many NGOs suggest, these new regulations may lead to serious human rights violations<sup>27</sup>, including detention in border centres, racial profiling, and digital surveillance<sup>28</sup>. Carmine Conte and Başak Yavcan from the Migration Policy Group, an independent Brussels-based think-and-do tank, underline that the fast-track border procedures will imply superficial assessments of the asylum applications and will increase the rate of non-admission of those entitled to obtain asylum<sup>29</sup>.

The new *Pact on Migration and Asylum* was designed to deter irregular migration to the EU, to better protect the Union’s external borders and, at the same time, to limit the rise of the far-right parties across the EU that have gained popularity due to the anti-migrant sentiments<sup>30</sup>, stirred by the decline in living standards<sup>31</sup>. While left-wing populist voters

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<sup>25</sup> Heller, F., (2024). “Med-5 group slams EU Migration Pact, wants focus on preventing flows”, *Euractiv*, April 22. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/med-5-group-slams-eu-migration-pact-wants-focus-on-preventing-flows/>. Accessed on: July 31, 2024.

<sup>26</sup> European Policy Centre, Hybrid conference (2024): “The New Pact on Migration and Asylum: Unpacking responsibility and solidarity”, moderated by Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director, European Affairs programme, Egmont Institute, and Helena Hahn, Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre, March 21. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6Ae7f6Bdoc>.

<sup>27</sup> International Rescue Committee, (2023). “*What is the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum – Explainer*”, October 27. Available at: <https://www.rescue.org/eu/article/what-eu-pact-migration-and-asylum>. Accessed on: July 31, 2024. Amnesty International, (2024). “EU: Migration and Asylum Pact reforms will put people at heightened risk of human rights violations”, April 4. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/eu-migration-asylum-pact-put-people-at-risk-human-rights-violations/>. Accessed on: September 10, 2024.

<sup>28</sup> Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), (2024). “The EU Migration Pact: a dangerous regime of migrant surveillance”, April 11. Available at: <https://picum.org/blog/the-eu-migration-pact-a-dangerous-regime-of-migrant-surveillance/>. For more information on this topic, see Catelli, C., (2024). “Beyond walls and fences: EU funding used for a complex and digitalised border surveillance system”, PICUM and European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), June. Available at: [https://picum.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Beyond-walls-and-fences-EU-funding-used-for-a-complex-and-digitalised-border-surveillance-system\\_EN.pdf](https://picum.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Beyond-walls-and-fences-EU-funding-used-for-a-complex-and-digitalised-border-surveillance-system_EN.pdf). Accessed on: September 26, 2024.

<sup>29</sup> Conte, C., and Yavcan, B., (2024). “Reflection Paper on the New EU Pact on Migration & Asylum”, Migration Policy Group, p. 1. Available at: <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Reflection-Paper-.pdf>. Accessed on: September 1, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Bryant, L., (2024). “In France and Elsewhere in Europe, Far Right Feeds on Anti-Migrant Sentiments”, VOA news, January 25. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/in-france-and-elsewhere-in-europe-far-right-feeds-on-anti-migrant-sentiments-/7457605.html>. Accessed on: September 10, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Euronews, (2023). “Nearly half of Europeans say their standards of living have ‘already’ declined as crises mount”, January 12. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/business/2023/01/12/nearly-half-of-europeans-say-their-standards-of-living-have-already-declined-as-crises-mou>. Accessed on: October 13, 2024.

acknowledge “the positive effects of immigration”, the right-wing populists consider migrants a major “threat to native workers and the welfare state”<sup>32</sup>.

We should bear in mind that this comprehensive pact “is just an internal ‘asylum management’ system” that will not function in case of large migratory waves because of the limited human and financial resources. Therefore, it is crucial to reduce the number of illegal arrivals (more than 90% of which are facilitated by smuggling networks) through partnerships with the countries of origin, argued Grigoris Delavekouras, Head of Justice and Home Affairs Unit, Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU. In his opinion, the current trend is “unsustainable”<sup>33</sup>. In 2023, “Frontex reported some 380,000 illegal border crossings”, 17% more than in 2022<sup>34</sup>. Many of those who reach Europe do not go back, even if their asylum claims are rejected. The repatriation rate is low (21%), and the truth is Europe cannot accommodate them all. They remain in a sort of “limbo”<sup>35</sup>, as Catherine Woollard, Director of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, stated. On October 4, 2024, seventeen European countries (14 EU Member States and 3 members of the European Free Trade Association that are also part of the Schengen area, namely Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) addressed a letter to the European Commission to enable faster returns of the irregular migrants through a stricter return policy<sup>36</sup>. In its 17 October Conclusions, the European Council reiterated their plea, “call[ing] for determined action at all levels to facilitate, increase and speed up returns from the European Union, using all relevant EU policies, instruments and tools, including diplomacy, development, trade and visas”. Moreover, the European Council “invite[d] the Commission to submit a new legislative proposal, as a matter of urgency”<sup>37</sup>. Ursula von der Leyen revealed that the concept of “safe

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<sup>32</sup> Nam, C.W., (2024). “Introduction to the Issue on Rise of Populism: Causes, Consequences and Policy Implications?”, *EconPol Forum*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, March, p. 3. Available at: <https://www.econpol.eu/sites/default/files/2024-03/econpol-forum-2024-2-populism.pdf>. Accessed on: October 13, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> European Policy Centre, Hybrid conference...

<sup>34</sup> Bryant, L., *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> European Policy Centre, Hybrid conference...

<sup>36</sup> Strupczewski, J., and Payne, J., (2024). “Germany, France, other EU states push to speed up migrant returns”, *Reuters*, October 4. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-france-other-eu-states-push-speed-up-migrant-returns-2024-10-04/>. Accessed on: October 20, 2024.

<sup>37</sup> European Council, (2024). “European Council conclusions, 17 October 2024”, Brussels, EUCO 25/24, p. 9. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/10/17/european-council-conclusions-17-october-2024/>. Accessed on: October 20, 2024.

third country” was also discussed, as well as the possibility of cooperating with UN agencies for increasing the rate of returns<sup>38</sup>.

To sum up, this pact cannot solve all the issues related to migration and asylum in the European Union, but it is a step forward in creating a unified system with standard procedures. It is an attempt to shield the EU from hefty challenges that overwhelm it. And those who blame Europe because it cannot accept these increasing migratory waves should remember that refugees are entitled to international protection and therefore the EU is not the only one who should provide such protection. Despite the undeniable good will, we, Europeans, are not an Atlas to hold the entire world on our shoulders.

We do have some wonderful values in Europe that most of us cherish (freedom, democracy, the respect for human rights, the rule of law, etc.) and noble principles of solidarity, philanthropy and humanitarian assistance, and the most intransigent of us expect that our love for mankind “will look on tempests and be never shaken”<sup>39</sup>, but in my opinion, we have to strike the right balance between our responsibility towards our own poor and vulnerable groups and the responsibility towards those of the wider world. “In 2023, 94.6 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion; this was equivalent to 21.4 % of the EU population”<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Le Monde and AFP, (2024). “EU leaders urge new laws to speed up migrant returns”, October 18. Available at: [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/18/eu-leaders-urge-new-laws-to-speed-up-migrant-returns\\_6729714\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/18/eu-leaders-urge-new-laws-to-speed-up-migrant-returns_6729714_4.html). Accessed on: October 20, 2024.

<sup>39</sup> “[...] love is not love/ Which alters when it alteration finds,/ Or bends with the remover to remove./ O no, it is an ever-fixed mark/ That looks on tempests and is never shaken” (Shakespeare, *Sonnet 116*).

<sup>40</sup> Eurostat, (2024). “Living conditions in Europe – poverty and social exclusion”, Eurostat Statistics Explained. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living\\_conditions\\_in\\_Europe\\_-\\_poverty\\_and\\_social\\_exclusion](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion). Accessed on: September 28, 2024.

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