

EU MIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY AND THE PUBLIC DEBATE

Migration has always been an essential reality of Europe and has contributed to shaping its foundations, priorities and public debates across the years. Most recently, with the large migration flows of 2015-2016, multiple voices from governments, law-makers, citizens and stakeholders from across Europe have asked for a deep reform of the EU migration and asylum policy framework. The images of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean Sea have seen Europe-wide expressions of solidarity, while at the same time anti-migrant rhetoric has increasingly pervaded the political debate.

As part of her agenda for the EU, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen set the improvement of the EU migration and asylum rules as an objective. In September 2020, the European Commission presented the long-awaited **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, a proposal that aimed to, inter alia, establish a common framework that contributes to the **comprehensive approach** to asylum and migration management, make the system **more efficient** and **more resistant** to migratory pressure and support the **most affected Member states** better.

Moreover, the European Commission is expected to present its revision of the Schengen Borders Code on 2 June, 2021, where security and EU migration policy are to be strongly interlinked.

In its last [Report on human rights protection and the EU external migration policy](#) of May 2021, the European Parliament adopted a critical position on the external handling by the EU of its migration policy, notably of its externalisation by third countries, lack of compliance with human rights obligations and the abuse of informal agreements on the return and readmission of irregular migrants.

In this context, the media plays a key role in how migration and its related challenges are perceived and discussed in our societies. The way the media covers migration has an impact on citizens' demands on the topic as well as on their political choices when casting their votes.

Furthermore, 2021-2022 will mark an important moment to debate Europe in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) launched on 9 May, 2021, and [migration](#) has been set as a priority topic for this continent-wide discussion. All citizens and stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the public debate through the [CoFoE digital platform](#). The most endorsed and discussed ideas and proposals will be presented to the Plenary of the Conference.

The first session of our event with MEPs, activists and stakeholders will discuss the current EU migration and asylum policy and its main challenges, and the possible way forward to achieve a truly EU-level migration system based on solidarity in the Schengen Area, within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The second session will focus on how migration is addressed in the public and media discourse with the participation of journalists and activists.

EVENT PROGRAMME

21 June, 18:00 CEST

DAY 1: Migration and the Future of Europe

Debate - How can the EU address migration through a predictable, balanced and reliable system?

- MEP Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR, Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)
- Regina CATRAMBONE, Director of Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS)
- Apostolos VEIZIS, Executive Director of INTERSOS Greece
- Paloma FAVIERES, Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)

Moderates: Daphne GOGOU, UEF Board Member & UEF Greece Vice-President

◆ Training: How to use the digital platform on the Conference of the Future of Europe - Mariona ESPÍN ONIEVA, UEF Communication Officer

24 June, 17:00 CEST

DAY 2: Migration and the media in Europe

Debate - How is migration presented and discussed in the public debate? How does the media contribute to framing that discussion? How to address fake news and misinformation related to migration?

- Manuel DELIA, Blogger & Journalist at The Times of Malta
- Xandru CASSAR, Student activist
- Laura Traveso, Communication Manager, Red Acoge

Moderates: Alejandra Oriola ALMARCHA, UEF Director

◆ Workshop: How to make the EU fit for the migration phenomenon of our times? - Chantelle SAMMUT, Student University of Malta