

Migration Update

June 2026



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

Migration Update June 2026

The purpose of these news summaries is to provide a factual base for migration debates within the European centre-right. [Vít Novotný](#) is responsible for the selection of information items from the media, governments and social media. The value of these summaries is in the categorisation of information items and in listing those items that readers might have missed. Facts and opinions are conveyed as they are reported. Original comments are kept to a minimum. Claudia Masi and Rainer Münz submitted news items. These news summaries are not subject to a formal editorial process. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Vít Novotný at vn@martenscentre.eu.

- During 2025, the **US resettled 11,500 refugees**. The combined figure for the **EU and the UK was 7,800**. ‘Most of the Europe-bound refugees went to France, followed by Germany, Netherlands and the UK’, [according to](#) the *EU Observer*, citing UNHCR figures.

Contents

NEW PACT ON MIGRATION	1
REGULARISATION.....	2
TEMPORARY PROTECTION.....	2
VISAS.....	3
Russians.....	3
Somalis.....	4
FRANCE-UK.....	4
GLOBAL.....	4
PUBLIC OPINION	5
MARTENS CENTRE PRODUCTION	5
SELECT EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS	5

NEW PACT ON MIGRATION

Legislation under the New Pact on Migration [came into effect](#) on 12 June 2026.

- The Pact is “the most complex reform of EU legislation on migration and asylum ever,” [according to](#) Magnus Brunner, EU commissioner for internal affairs and migration.
- “**Hungary** has not submitted an implementation plan and has not taken any step, neither operational, nor legal, to ensure that the pact, or any of its part, would be implemented,” [according to](#) András Léderer of the Budapest-based Hungarian Helsinki Committee.

On 17 June, the plenary of the European Parliament [adopted](#) the [Common system](#) for the return of third-country nationals staying illegally in the Union (**Return Regulation**), approving the informal deal reached [on 1 June with the Council](#).

- Some 418 MEPs voted in favour, 218 were against and there were 30 abstentions. Among those voting in favour [were](#) MEPs from the EPP (all minus one), ECR (all), ESN (all), NI (all minus three), PfiE, Renew (majority of MEPs), S&D (nine) and Greens (two). Opposed were the majority of S&D, the Left (all), Greens (vast majority) and Renew (21).
- Following Parliament's approval, the text needs to be formally adopted by Council and published in the Official Journal before it can enter into force. Some provisions, including on return hubs, the age assessment of minors and the external dimension of returns, **will apply immediately**. Other provisions that **require preparatory steps** will enter into application 12 months after the legislation's entry into force.

In an open letter published on 19 June, 'the leaders of **19 EU states**... [backed](#) plans to offshore asylum by setting up **so-called return hubs** abroad for people whose applications for international protection have been rejected. "We will personally lead the way to make sure our visions are brought to life," they said... The letter was signed by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Sweden.' Spain and France publicly criticised the plans. Germany did not attach its signature to the letter.

On 2 June, the European Commission [issued opinions](#) on temporary internal border controls maintained by Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden. The Commission [recommended](#) that Germany, France, the Netherlands, and six other countries gradually lift their internal border controls within the Schengen Area.

REGULARISATION

'Spain's government [has received](#) around **900,000 applications** from undocumented migrants seeking legal status under a programme that initially expected half a million requests.... Spain has granted 360,000 temporary work permits since April, representing about 40% of all requests received, the ministry added. People are allowed to begin working as soon as their applications are admitted for processing... Spain has long suffered from chronic delays in its immigration system, with thousands of migrants from Colombia or Senegal waiting years for asylum, which is rejected in over 90% of cases. These strict policies have left roughly 840,000 undocumented migrants waiting for years to obtain other forms of residency, while living in the country and working off the books as they go through the process, according to think tank Funcas.'

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

On 26 June, the European Commission [proposed](#) 'to extend for an additional year the temporary protection for people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine... The objective of this Commission proposal is... twofold:

- First, to provide for continued legal certainty, stability and predictability by prolonging temporary protection by one additional year [from 5 March 2027] **until 4 March 2028**, since the need for protection of people fleeing Ukraine remains clear.

- Second, to reconcile the protection needs with Ukraine's overall ability to defend itself against Russia's illegal war of aggression. To ensure this, **temporary protection is not to be granted as a rule to newly arriving persons who are not authorised by the Ukrainian authorities to leave Ukraine in view of their military obligations.**

At the same time, it is important that member states **further step up preparations for a coordinated transition** out of temporary protection – in line with the 2025 Council Recommendation. This must include both the possibility to transition into longer-term legal resident status as well as opportunities for sustainable return and reintegration in Ukraine when the situation allows. This process has already started in many member states and should remain a priority.

- The Commission will develop, in close cooperation with interested Member States and the Ukrainian authorities, a Voluntary Return and Recovery Programme Pilot. The programme will support those who wish to return with practical support in key areas such as jobs, housing, and education in Ukraine.
- It is now for the Council to adopt the Commission proposal.'

As for the proposed ban on arriving Ukrainians with military obligations, *EU Observer* [reported](#) that according to Magnus Brunner, the EU's home affairs commissioner, 'the curtailment takes into account **Ukraine's evolving defence needs** as Russia continues to pound the country with drones, missiles and ground forces. Ukraine has also been attempting to recruit new people into its fighting forces, following years of fighting that have seen Russia seize approximately 20 percent of its territory. The latest measure would likely affect men of fighting age, ranging anywhere from the mid-20s to 60.

The EU has been providing Ukrainians with a blanket temporary protection status since 2022, which has been extended annually.

The announcement follows earlier reports that at least **200,000 Ukrainian soldiers have gone AWOL** (absence without leave). The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think-tank, says the number reflects poor conditions rather than a declining willingness to fight.'

[Note that on 16 September 2025, the Council [adopted](#) a recommendation to phase out temporary protection in favour of national residence permits issued to refugees from Ukraine based on the grounds of employment, training, education or family as of March 2027. The prolongation of temporary protection from 2027 to 2028 testifies that the member states have not sufficiently taken up this recommendation.]

VISAS

Russians

A coalition of nine EU member states (Sweden with the support of Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland), Iceland and Norway [signed a joined letter](#), asking the European Commission to tighten visa conditions for Russian tourists. "What I want to accomplish is very clear. I want there

to be no more shopping weekends. I want no more fancy trips to Europe while Ukrainians are dying on the battlefield," Johan Forssell, Sweden's Minister for Migration and Asylum (EPP) told.

- **France** issued the highest number of visas to Russian nationals in 2025, at just under 180,000 — a significant jump from 2024. **Italy** ranked second at just under 160,000, despite a slight decrease on the previous year. Spain came third at just under 100,000, broadly stable year on year.'
- According to one observer, 'when the numbers got awkward, the [European Commission] [deleted them](#) - Russian visa statistics quietly **vanished from the official Schengen tracker** in early 2026. Therefore, 9 EU countries had to formally demand they be put back.'
- The letter [states](#) that 'according to the Schengen Barometer, **477,878 Schengen visas** were issued to Russian citizens for tourism purposes in 2025. A significant share of these have been multiple-entry visas. This stands in stark contrast to the Commission's guidelines calling for a strict approach toward Russian applicants travelling for non-essential purposes and represents a major shortcoming in our collective policy towards the aggressor state.'
- In 2025, 77% of visas issued to Russian citizens [were](#) tourist visas.

Somalis

On 25 June, the Council [decided](#) 'to temporarily restrict visa provision for **Somali nationals**. This decision follows an assessment by the Commission, which concludes that cooperation by Somalia on readmitting its nationals staying irregularly in the EU is insufficient. As a result, it will **no longer be possible** for member states: to issue multiple entry visas to Somali nationals; to waive requirements with regard to the evidence visa applicants from Somalia must submit; and to waive the visa fee for **holders of diplomatic and service passports**. Furthermore, the standard processing period for visa applications will be set at 45 calendar days instead of 15. The suspension decision is temporary but does not come with a specific end date. The objective is to encourage Somalia to improve **cooperation on readmission**, and the Commission will continue to assess any progress made.'

FRANCE-UK

'French **riot police** have been [deployed to France's northern beaches](#) to combat violence and disrupt small boat crossings. A total of 125 officers from two specialist units are operating on the beaches, backed by drones, helicopters, planes and camera surveillance systems. They are part of a £650m, three-year deal signed by Shabana Mahmood, the UK Home Secretary, to deter small boat crossings.....Some 9,852 people have made the journey so far this year – 40 per cent less than at the same point last year and 14 per cent less than at the same point in 2024.'

GLOBAL

[According to](#) an academic article by Gaskin and Abel, "our estimates reveal that, since 2000, global migration movements have risen from 13 million people annually to around 35 million in 2023... This trend is not explained by a rising global population, as **per-capita migration saw a similarly steady increase from 0.2% in 2000 to 0.45% in 2023**... Since the turn of the millennium, total global migration has

only seen two periods of sustained decrease: during the Great Recession in 2008 to 2009, and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. [According to one commentator, the estimated flow size may be unreliable as it is derived from a change of stock estimation, not on actual flow data--which do not exist for some relevant corridors].

PUBLIC OPINION

The European Council on Foreign Relations [published](#) a large survey of citizens in 14 EU countries and the UK. Answering the question, 'Generally, in your daily life, how worried are you about the following potential events?', the percentages of respondents who chose the following options under the 'very worried' category were:

- A major economic crisis in your country 32%
- Democracy declining in your country 28%
- **A new migration crisis at the EU's borders 26%**
- The US under Donald Trump pulling your country into a war with another country 23%
- There being a major European war (i.e. not just in Ukraine) 23%
- Climate change having serious effects on life in your country 21%.

A Martens Centre study that utilised public opinion data gathered by Glocalities over the years 2023-25 in 9 countries of the EU and in the US, [found](#) the following: 'On a more open-border policy for migrants and refugees (0) versus stricter border protection (100), **most countries cluster in the mid-60s**... Given the scale definition, scores above 50 here mean a tilt towards the second option, in this case, stricter border protection'. Countries ranked (p.36) between 56 (Italy and Spain; most open) and 67 (Germany; the strictest).

MARTENS CENTRE PRODUCTION

P. Hefele, M. Lampert and P. Papadongonas, *Common Ground and Complementary Strengths for Recalibrating EU–US Relations*, Martens Centre, 9 June 2026

SELECT EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

J. Dennison, 'Immigration threat perceptions: Experimental evidence of causes and consequences' *Migration Studies*, 2/14, June 2026, mnag018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnag018>

Disclaimer

This publication receives funding from the European Parliament.

© 2026 Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

The European Parliament and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies assume no responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in this publication or their subsequent use. Sole responsibility lies with the author of this publication.