



A New Pact for a Europe that Truly Protects:

An Overview of IRC Recommendations for the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum



To read the IRC's in-depth recommendations on the Pact, please see: [*A New Pact for a Europe that Truly Protects.*](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic further amplified the extreme vulnerabilities experienced by people on the move that result from longstanding and unresolved challenges. The presentation of a new 'EU Pact on Migration and Asylum' provides a crucial opportunity to move away from 'business as usual' and to shape a long-term European strategy that truly protects people on the move both within and beyond the EU's borders. This renewed effort has the potential to shape a common European approach that puts fairer and more humane policies in place, that work for both new arrivals and host communities.

As part of discussions around the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework and COVID-19 Recovery Plan (Next Generation EU), the Pact should also play a key role in ensuring that refugees and asylum-seekers are fully integrated into funding frameworks for the next seven years.

Informed by our current programming and expertise, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) recommends that, with this new Pact, the EU institutions and its member states should:

1 Address the protection crisis within the EU, and especially in Greece, by:

- Including an unequivocal commitment to protect and uphold the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement throughout the EU, while also reassessing restrictive political agreements such as the EU-Turkey Statement;
- Ensuring that the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees to access critical services are protected and provided for by monitoring compliance with existing EU legislation and through significant investment to ensure all member states' asylum systems meet existing EU legal requirements; and
- Reviving negotiations to agree a fair, humane and sustainable system to share responsibility for all people seeking international protection in Europe, including by prioritising family unity and implementing a mechanism assigning responsibilities to member states in a fair and predictable way.

2 Provide principled leadership and adequate funding for the integration and social inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers, by:

- Promoting integration in the EU as an explicit objective of any common European approach to asylum and migration;
- Evaluating and renewing the 2016 EU Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals following a comprehensive and inclusive consultation on its impact and shortcomings, as well as on the priorities for the new Action Plan;

- Encouraging and incentivising member states which currently have higher standards than the EU legislative minimum to maintain these;
- Prioritising the strengths and needs integration of refugee and asylum-seeking women in the EU through targeted policies and funding; and
- Ensuring these priorities are fully costed and integrated within related policy and funding frameworks, notably the European Semester.

3 Reinforce and scale up EU resettlement to reach 250,000 places by 2025, by:

- Making a clear commitment to a continuous and significant increase in EU resettlement, as part of efforts to implement the Global Compact on Refugees;
- Restarting the stalled negotiations and adopting the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework;
- Re-focusing on the nature of resettlement as a protection tool and a durable solution for the most vulnerable, explicitly stating that providing resettlement places is not an alternative to upholding the right to claim asylum; and
- Resuming regular, at least quarterly, reporting on progress on pledges and further improving disaggregated data collection (type of pathway, status granted, countries of origin and asylum).

4 Protect people on the move at Europe's borders and beyond, including along irregular migration routes, by:

- Fostering improved cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination that addresses the real needs of people on the move;
- Establishing a well-functioning search and rescue (SAR) operation to save lives at sea, underpinned by a fair and binding disembarkation system;
- Committing to promote alternatives to detention; and
- Re-invigorating the EU commitment to strengthen the protection of migrants and refugees in third countries through the adoption of national legal frameworks in line with international human rights standards.

5 Strengthen the coherence between migration and development policies, by:

- Playing a crucial role in reshaping cooperation on migration between the European Union and African countries based on the principle of equal partnership, supporting regular migration routes to Europe in the process;
- Providing the strategic direction for European donors to scale up investment to address the real needs of communities in countries of origin, transit and destination, with a 'whole-of-route approach';
- Paying special attention to 'vulnerable migrants' by including provisions that ensure their access to basic services along the route; and
- Committing to include migrants, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), both within and outside the EU, when measuring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).