



A progressive Pact on Asylum and Migration - social democrats are leading the way

Adopted by the PES Presidency on 9 February 2023

In 2020 Commissioner Johansson presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Once again, social democrats are paving the way forward, with concrete answers to one of the most complex issues facing the EU for several years. We congratulate Commissioner Johansson for her enormous efforts that deliver an ambitious and comprehensive plan.

Social democrats always aimed to move towards a predictable and reliable common EU asylum and migration management system based on solidarity and a fair sharing of responsibility with a particular attention to the protection of children and of women, as the Pact does. Member States must live up to these principles as well as their international obligations, by committing to saving lives, showing solidarity with people in need, as well as to other Member States. A common EU system must be based on true solidarity and shared responsibility, fair and effective procedures, humane reception conditions, partnerships on equal footing with third countries, legal pathways and effective inclusion.

The successful way in which the EU welcomed an unprecedented arrival of refugees from Ukraine is proof of what we can achieve with solidarity and a progressive approach. The immediate and unanimous activation of the Temporary Protection Directive, as proposed by Ylva Johansson, allowed the EU to offer immediate protection and a clear legal status for refugees fleeing the Russian aggression. We acted to welcome the most vulnerable, and protect them from abuse and human trafficking, which have put women and unaccompanied minors particularly at risk. This reality must provide the momentum for moving in the right direction with the finalisation and endorsement of the EU Pact for migration and inclusion, in order to address challenges such as the increased number of migrants arriving along various routes. EU Member States and the European Parliament must adopt the measures which allow the Pact on Migration and Asylum to bring a fair sharing of responsibility and an effective mandatory solidarity mechanism.

Work on the adoption of the Pact is continuing, the past months intensive work has focused on finalising its process and integrate measures for solidarity and fully shared responsibility. The Declaration on voluntary solidarity agreed in June 2022 between 18 Member States was an important first step in this process. We welcome the Roadmap that was adopted in September 2022 by the European Parliament and the 5 rotating EU presidencies committing them to adopt all the legislative files of the Pact before the end of this mandate. EU Member States must work together and dedicate all efforts to make sure we reach an agreement. Now, the current and upcoming presidencies must act swiftly and decisively to ensure that the Council has a mandate to negotiate with the Parliament on all the elements of the New Pact, especially those incorporating solidarity.

In our PES Congress resolution “Leading progress through change” adopted in Berlin on 14 October 2022, we reiterated our call for a swift agreement of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, measures to combat human smuggling and trafficking, as well as progressive inclusion



policies. For the PES it is clear that all Member States must take their fair share of responsibility. The specific situation of search and rescue cases asks for a fair, predictable and sustainable system of disembarkation and relocation. EU funds should not be used to build walls or fund externalisation. We must have common, effective border management, while safeguarding fundamental rights. People fleeing war and persecution have the right to protection and no Member State nor individual region or city should shoulder a disproportionate responsibility. At the same time, we must ensure effective legal migration avenues.

Migration has always existed. Together and with the right policies, it is a great source of diversity and opportunities for all. Legal migration pathways are needed to acquire new talent and offers opportunities to people around the world. At the same time, as PES, to be true to our values and the Treaty, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the EU acts as a global leader in defending the right of asylum. A progressive Pact on Migration and Asylum is the way forward.