

# [***EU reaches 'landmark' agreement on asylum reform but deal still faces challenge of ratification***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X9-D211-DY7V-G3MJ-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

December 20, 2023 Wednesday 3:35 PM GMT

Copyright 2023 Cable News Network All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 721 words

**Byline:** By Alex Hardie and Luke McGee, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; [*The European Union*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/17/europe/ursula-von-der-leyen-lampedusa-migrant-crisis-intl/index.html) has reached a provisional agreement to "thoroughly overhaul" its laws on asylum and [*migration*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/27/europe/germany-border-controls-migration-debate-intl/index.html), a move being hailed as a landmark but which could face challenges when each member state comes to approve it.

The deal covers the political elements of five EU laws that "touch upon all stages of asylum and migration management," the European Council said in a statement, adding that all five are components of the pact on migration and asylum proposed by the European Commission in 2020.

The five EU laws agreed upon address issues including the screening of irregular migrants, procedures for handling asylum applications, rules on determining which member state is responsible for handling an asylum application, and how to handle crisis situations, according to the European Council statement.

"The new rules, once adopted, will make the European asylum system more effective and will increase the solidarity between member states by enabling to lighten the load on those member states where most migrants arrive," the statement added.

There have long been complaints that some EU members receive far more migrants than others. Under the proposals, countries not at the border will have to choose between accepting their share of 30,000 asylum applicants or paying at least 20,000 euros ($21,870) per person into an EU fund, Reuters reported.

The agreement was made between the current Spanish presidency of the European Council, which rotates between member states every six months, and the European Parliament.

While the agreement was hailed as historic by Roberta Metsola, president of the European Parliament, a formal deal will still need to be approved by all 27 members of the European Union and ratified by the Parliament, where multiple blocs of parliamentarians oppose the deal.

The European Council noted that the next step of the process will be submitting the provisional agreement to member states for confirmation.

Metsola said in a post on social media that "20th December 2023 will go down in history. The day the EU reached a landmark agreement on a new set of rules to manage migration and asylum."

Refugee charities have criticized the deal, along with members of the European Parliament.

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles, an alliance of 117 NGOs working to protect asylum seekers, said on social media that the deal [*marked a "dark day for Europe."*](https://twitter.com/ecre/status/1737415131758293323)

Amnesty International reacted to the agreement on Wednesday, saying that it "will lead to a surge in suffering for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants on every step of their journeys."

The ***politics*** of migration

Migration, particularly the question of how to deal with the large influx of refugees that Europe has seen in recent years, has come to dominate European ***politics***, particularly on the right.

Europe's geographical location and comparatively friendly record on human rights and support for refugees has made it an attractive destination for those fleeing conflict.

The EU has a vast external border, ranging from the Mediterranean Sea - close to parts of North Africa and the Middle East - to land borders with Russia in the east. Conflicts in these parts of the world over the past couple of decades have naturally led to many people seeking entry to Europe.

The EU faces other unique challenges when it comes to irregular migration, not least because 22 of the 27 EU member states are part of the borderless Schengen area, which makes tracking movement across the bloc somewhat trickier.

The frictionless movement is something that most Europeans don't want to give up for economic reasons, but a lack of control on migration is the other side of the coin.

Unsurprisingly, this creates ample opportunity for anti-EU politicians to whack Brussels, a tried and tested political strategy for politicians across the bloc. For opposition parties, it means you can hold your government's feet to the fire on domestic migration policy.

The day before the EU reached its deal on migration, the French parliament passed a controversial immigration bill, which France's leading far-right politician Marine Le Pen called an "unquestionable ideological victory" for her party.

By Alex Hardie and Luke McGee, CNN

TM & © 2023 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** December 20, 2023

**End of Document**