

France: France debates immigration after Macron says country shouldn't be 'too attractive' to migrants

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French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has outlined possible changes to France's immigration laws which could include quotas on new arrivals.

His comments come amid a controversial debate in the French parliament about immigration that come a week after President Emmanuel Macron said that France should not be too attractive to immigrants.

We need a debate to assess what we do compared to our neighbours. Do we really have to fully reimburse everything ? Aren't there some excesses ? Macron said on September 25.

Speaking during the debate in the National Assembly, Philippe said the government had "not achieved all (its) objectives" on migration and that the French asylum system today is "saturated."

Philippe said France had seen 123,000 asylum applications in 2018, an increase of 22% compared to 2017.

The focus on immigration ahead of French municipal elections in 2020 has prompted concern from the French left, with Socialist politician Luc Carvournas arguing that the rhetoric was poached from the far right.

Carvournas said that recent statements on immigration drew comparisons with Italy, where Matteo Salvini, the head of the La Liga party and until recently Minister of the Interior, has been outspoken in his opposition to immigration and asylum.

Macron has also been criticised by the far right, with National Rally leader Marine Le Pen accusing the president of using immigration to win votes in next year's election.

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