



DELIVERABLE D9.1 COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION PLAN AND COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS

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Introduction

The deliverable D9.1 Communication & Dissemination Plan and Communication outputs includes activities that are delivered at different moments in the project. In the first half of 2025, the FAiR consortium has delivered seven op-eds.

Deliverable 9.1, Task 9.6 Public Engagement, calls for 14 op-eds or interviews. As of 31 July, the FAiR consortium has produced 7 opinion pieces published in Italian media, by Professor Maurizio Ambrosini from the University of Milan. Below is the 3rd translated opinion piece, along with their original publishing link, as well as the English translated link to the FAiR website.

Opinion: The EU Pact on Immigration and Asylum: A Step Backward on Human Rights



Photo: Press conference by Alexander De Croo, Belgian Prime Minister, Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, on the adoption of the Pact on Asylum and Migration

By [Maurizio Ambrosini, Full Professor, University of Milan](#) and [Arjen Leerkes, Associate Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam](#), FaiR consortium partners, **25 April 2024**

The agreement reached at the European level on a new Pact on Immigration and Asylum has been hailed by its proponents as a historic breakthrough. After seven years of attempts and three years of negotiations under the presidency of Ursula von der Leyen, there was a need to showcase a tangible result ahead of the upcoming European elections in June.

The pact has been structured into five chapters:

1. Regulation of entry selection through uniform rules for identifying those seeking to cross the EU borders;
2. Eurodac Regulation, with the development of a common database among member countries containing biometrics on new entrants;
3. Regulation of asylum procedures, with the aim of making them quicker and more effective;
4. Regulation of migration and asylum management, establishing a new mechanism of solidarity among Member States and clear rules on the responsibility for handling asylum applications;
5. Regulation of crisis and force majeure situations, ensuring that the EU is prepared to face unforeseen events in the future, including the "instrumentalization of migrants."

Where you land is where you start

Without delving into the details, let's focus on some key aspects. One is the partial overcoming of the Dublin Regulation, which **obligates the entry state to handle asylum requests by introducing a form of mandatory solidarity with the redistribution of refugees to other EU countries "in case of a sudden increase in arrivals"**: a clause that will undoubtedly spark debate and could jeopardize the progress made.



The numbers are modest: redistribution should start with 30,000 places per year, which would increase to 60,000 the following year, then 90,000, up to 120,000 from the fourth year onwards. This represents a very small quota of the people who apply for asylum in the EU each year: over 960,000 in 2022. For the others, the Dublin Regulation will still apply, i.e., the responsibility of the state of first entry. This means that border countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece, risk having to bear the lion's share of the responsibility to receive asylum seekers. It should be noted that at present, contrary to widespread opinion, only 8% of the applications in 2022 (as in previous years) were started in Italy, with 77,000 asylum applications, compared to 218,000 for Germany, 137,000 for France, and 116,000 for Spain.

Accept or pay 20,000 euro per asylum seeker

As previously announced in draft versions of the pact, governments who do not want to welcome asylum seekers in their countries will have an alternative: to pay a sum of 20,000 euros for each person refused. This seems like a rather mild compensation, but the Hungarian government (and previously the Polish government) has resolutely rejected this possibility. On the Italian front, Minister Piantedosi has declared his unwillingness to accept monetary contributions in exchange for hosting refugees, explaining that a major country like Italy does not need them. In the name of national pride, he has refused the argument of 'pay outs' as a reason for closing the doors to refugees.

This recent agreement, however, meets the expectations of the EU countries without relevant external EU borders by extending the blockade of refugees in the countries of first arrival from 12 to 20 months. This is with the exception of people rescued at sea (for whom it remains 12 months). Further, the agreement also introduces simplified procedures for sending asylum seekers who cross internal EU borders back to the country of first entry.

Brussels intends to counteract "secondary migrations" and increase the number of refugees sent back after trying to settle in another European country. This plan includes collecting biometric data even on children, starting from the age of six, compared to the current age of 14: officially to protect them, but more likely to send them back, more easily, to the country of arrival.

Creating grey zones puts human rights at risk

Significant efforts, however, have been focused on restricting entry, the ability to obtain asylum, or at least to remain in the EU. First, the procedures for presenting and evaluating asylum applications will be unified, replacing the national procedures in place until now. For example, refugees arriving in the EU will be held for seven days in special identification centers at the borders to verify their identity and subject them to medical and security checks. The Italian ASGI (Association for Legal Studies on Immigration) has criticized this for introducing the "legal fiction of non-entry", configuring the border zones as extraterritorial areas, establishing legal grey zones, and risking excluding refugees from effective protection of their rights. Moreover, forcibly detaining refugees who have spontaneously entered the territory by land or sea, means depriving often vulnerable people who are in need of protection.

All in the name of 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'

Detention at the borders is mainly aimed at implementing a more stringent screening of asylum applications and quicker repatriation of those denied. This is at least the hope of European and national officials. An accelerated procedure for examining applications will be introduced based on a list of countries deemed safe (because less than 20% of asylum requests from refugees from those countries have previously been accepted). Refugees from a country on the list will have their asylum application examined within a reduced time frame of 12 weeks and may meanwhile be detained. It is evidently assumed that these are unfounded applications destined



for rejection, which should be followed (in theory) by a quick forced return to the country of origin.

Other measures for this purpose include an additional three months of detention. ASGI has also drawn attention to this provision, denouncing a system "not only repressive but also discriminatory based on nationality". Detaining at the border beyond the 12 weeks, awaiting repatriation, also means "persisting in the violation of the right to personal freedom", exposing migrants to the risk of refoulement, i.e., expulsion to countries where their safety and personal integrity would be at risk. It should be added that accelerating the evaluation times of applications not only requires more agile regulations but also adequate staffing, i.e., investments of resources by governments. Just as repatriations require agreements with the countries of origin, which must be defined, funded, and made operational.

The goal of greater effectiveness in expelling unwanted refugees is also pursued through another provision, of which the Italian government has claimed ownership: the possibility of expelling denied asylum seekers not only to their country of origin but possibly also to a country with which they have "reasonable links", for example, because they have transited through it. This opens the way to rejections and harassment; in North African countries like Libya and Tunisia, exposing the people involved to violence, harassment, and violations of fundamental rights.

A wolf in sheep's skin

Beyond these provisions, the pact insists on cooperation with the governments of the countries of origin and transit: what is technically called the external dimension of migration policies. The declared objectives are five: to support countries hosting refugees and welcoming communities; to create economic opportunities close to home, particularly for the young; to combat migrant trafficking; to improve repatriation and readmission, intensify voluntary repatriations, and contribute to reintegration; to develop regulated channels for legal migration.

The language is very cautious, but the underlying political vision is clear: the EU intends to operate to retain refugees in transit countries, financing their reception, even better, to promote the development of the countries of origin, ignoring the evidence on the links between the first phase of a development process and the increase in departures. It insists on repatriations, both voluntary and forced, and on reintegration in the homeland. It re-launches the criminalisation of transporters, assembled under the label of traffickers, hiding the fact that for those fleeing developing countries, there are no alternatives: the fight against traffickers is a fight against refugees. In return, the European institutions and national governments offer a cautious opening to entries for work. Still, it is highly doubtful that this could involve countries at war or stifled by oppressive regimes and enemies of the West, such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Sudan.

Ursula von der Leyen, in her ten-point speech given during her visit to Lampedusa in September 2023, had frankly expressed the line of the Commission she presides over. In addition to more transfers of refugees to other European countries, more repatriations, more fight against traffickers, more naval and aerial surveillance, destruction of the boats used in crossings, acceleration of procedures for examining asylum applications, offering (some) legal pathways for entry, preventing arrivals through the implementation of agreements like the one with Tunisia, explicitly mentioned on the occasion. It is not surprising that the Italian PM Giorgia Meloni agreed and was able to assert that Brussels has aligned with her positions.

Link to article on FAiR website: [Opinion: The EU Pact on Immigration and Asylum: A Step Backward on Human Rights - Fair Return \(fair-return.org\)](https://www.fair-return.org/en/opinion/the-eu-pact-on-immigration-and-asylum-a-step-backward-on-human-rights-fair-return)