

What do the manifestos of European political groups say about asylum and migration?

The adoption of political parties' manifestos is an important step in the positioning of the political parties as they give a clear picture of the political groups and where they stand on different issues.

ECRE has summarised the political group's manifesto into bullet points for a better overview and comparison of their position on asylum and migration. You can find the complete manifestos for each political group linked at the end of their respective sections.

1. European People's Party (EPP – currently holds 178 seats, projected to get 175 seats)

The EPP is the largest political group in the European Parliament (EP), it is broadly the centre-right of the Christian Democrat tradition. The current President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament are from the EPP.

EPP has MEPs from all the 27 MS.

Asylum and migration in the EPP manifesto:

- Control migration in accordance with international law and respect for fundamental rights, with the guiding principles of humanity and order.
- Halt uncontrolled migration to prevent overwhelming Europe's capacity to integrate and prioritise European Member States' decision-making over who enters Europe.
- Implement comprehensive electronic monitoring and structural and technical border protection, reinforce measures against human smugglers and traffickers, and increase burden-sharing in times of crisis.
- Promote shared responsibilities and strong human rights protection, with special attention to vulnerable people.
- Transform Frontex into a real European border and coast guard (increase resources and powers) focused on illegal immigration into the EU, helping Member States to secure the EU's external borders and increasing the return of illegal migrants to their countries.
- It is up to the Member States to deal with legal migration, determine how it best fits their national interests and facilitate legal migrants' inclusion and integration into society.
- Member States must be allowed to temporarily halt processing asylum applications in the event of the instrumentalisation of illegal migration to avoid being blackmailed by anyone trying to threaten Europe.
- Strengthening external border protection and preventing illegal migration is needed to secure and complete a Schengen Area without internal border controls. Bulgaria and Romania need to be fully admitted to the Schengen Area, including lifting of land border controls.
- The fundamental right to asylum will be upheld, and abuse of national asylum procedures needs to be addressed.
- Cooperation with third countries in the field of migration, including returns and readmission of their nationals, is crucial for relevant EU policies, instruments, and tools (*"we want to apply the concept of safe third countries"* and *"we propose to admit into the EU a quota of people in need of protection through annual humanitarian quotas of vulnerable individuals"*)
- Returning refugees to Ukraine is not recommended, given the current circumstances in the country.

- A new pact with African countries, supported by a European investment plan for Africa, is needed to tackle the migration problem at its core

2. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D - currently holds 139 seats, projected to get 140 seats)

The second-largest political group in the European Parliament is S&D. It is the main centre-left group. The current EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is from the S&D group.

S&D has MEPs from almost all MS, with the exception of Ireland.

Asylum and migration in the PES manifesto:

- A common and coordinated system for migration and asylum based on solidarity and shared responsibility.
- Fair and respectful procedures, safe and legal pathways, the right to asylum and protection, and humane and decent reception conditions that respect our values and laws. We must especially protect and support children and minors and act in their best interests. Legal assistance must be accessible throughout the procedure.
- Inclusive labour market policies, support for local authorities and stronger inclusion policies.
- Strengthen, manage, and control effectively the EU's external borders while protecting people's safety and rights.
- fight against traffickers and smugglers and punish Sexual violence and exploitation.
- Promote accountable and transparent partnerships with countries of origin and transit and stand against any form of EU border externalisation.
- Never criminalise humanitarian assistance and support European missions for search and rescue in the Mediterranean.
- Carry out return decisions effectively and in a safe and dignified manner.

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).

3. Renew Europe (currently holds 102 seats, projected to get 82 seats)

The Renew Europe group is a centrist Liberal founded in 2019. It comprises several factions: ALDE (All Liberal and Democrats in Europe), the oldest European liberal party, the EDP (European Democratic Party), Macron's Renaissance, and national parties without EU affiliation.

Renew Europe has MEPs from 24 MS: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Asylum and migration in the Renew Europe manifesto:

- Proper control of external borders to crack down on traffickers.
- Placing people's lives and dignity at the core of actions.
- Involve providing legal clarity for refugees and addressing root causes of displacement.
- Assessment of economic, and legal pathways is necessary to fulfil European economies' workforce needs.
- Integration of talents is due to existing labour shortages.

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).

Asylum and migration in the ALDE's manifesto:

- Reform the Common European Asylum System, aiming to stop smugglers' cynical and inhuman business model, improve reception standards, share responsibility, and make asylum procedures human rights-based and more efficient.

- Launch a European Action Plan for search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, prioritising the safety and dignity of individuals in distress. Ensure that there are consequences for pushbacks, mistreatment of migrants, and other violations of migrants' rights. Make agreements with third countries to halt irregular migration to the EU while upholding and protecting human rights.
- Addressing the push-and-pull factors of migration through partnership programs for job creation and climate change mitigation and providing objective information campaigns to counter smugglers' disinformation.
- Provide specialised legal counselling to protect the rights of LGBTI+ individuals seeking asylum, even if they originate from a country officially deemed 'safe'.
- Establish EU-managed common facilities outside the EU borders for asylum seekers, responsible for streamlined application processing.
- Reform Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, for effective control of EU external borders with respect for human rights.
- Advocate for ending politically-driven vetoes and fearmongering, supporting full Schengen Area accession for qualifying Member States.
- Emphasize the economic benefits of strong external EU borders and open internal borders.
- Develop effective foreign aid programmes prioritising democracy promotion, job creation, and climate change mitigation.
- Providing shelter to those fleeing war or persecution.
- The need to fight against human traffickers and smugglers.
- Tackle irregular migration and make the return and readmission policy more efficient to address the inhuman consequences for migrants and disruptive effects on our countries.
- Integration of migrants is crucial, especially considering declining populations and labour shortages.
- Opposition to populist anti-migrant rhetoric and policies undermining liberal values and global labour market competitiveness.

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).

4. European Greens/ European Free Alliance (G-EFA - currently holds 72 seats, projected to get 41 seats)

This group is an alliance of two parties—the European Greens and the European Free Alliance—both of which have presented a manifesto and proposed a common Spitzenkandidaten team. G-EFA is left-of-centre and brings together environmental/green parties as well as those focusing on regional and national interests, such as the Scottish National Party.

Greens/EFA has MEPs from 18 MS: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Sweden.

Asylum and migration in the European Greens manifesto:

- To uphold a fair asylum system that defends human rights and dignity based on solidarity and responsibility sharing.
- To work towards a human asylum system with fast and decentralised procedures. Member states must fairly share the responsibility for asylum applications based on a mandatory relocation mechanism.
- The Temporary Protection Directive in response to the refugee situation caused by the war in Ukraine should be replicated.
- To advocate for EU visas for Human Rights and Environmental Defenders.
- To provide legal protection for people forcibly displaced due to the climate crisis and environmental disasters.
- The specific vulnerability of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers must be addressed.

- To End the criminalisation of people on the move and illegal pushbacks at the borders of the EU must end.
- EU laws to harmonise standards on asylum procedures, reception conditions and safeguards must be enforced. We cannot accept imprisonment, mistreatment and abuse towards people seeking protection and a better life in the EU.
- To call for an EU-funded and EU-led Search and Rescue Mission in the Mediterranean and strengthen Frontex's humanitarian mandate and responsibility.
- To end the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance.
- Asylum seekers should be guaranteed access to legal help.
- Oppose so-called “migration deals,” such as that with Tunisia. Any cooperation with third countries on migration needs a human rights assessment.
- Making development cooperation with third countries conditional on “migration management” is unethical.
- A fair migration policy for the benefit of all.
- To develop a new, comprehensive Migration Code that provides visa opportunities for family reunification and work at different skill levels.
- Want to make it easier for newcomers to work and integrate through access to education, language support, and job opportunities.
- Access to justice needs to be ensured in all EU countries.
- To call for a comprehensive campaign to regularise long-term “sans-papiers” living in EU countries.
- To combat human trafficking and labour exploitation in the EU.

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).

Asylum and Migration in the EFA Manifesto

- Collaboration is essential to develop a common European response, the response should adhere to humanitarian principles and international law.
- Focus should be on creating safe and legal pathways for migration

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).

5. European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR -currently hold 68 seats, projected to get 79 seats)

Broadly centre-right and Eurosceptic, it contains mainly Poland's Law and Justice Party (PiS). The origin of this group can be found in David Cameron's desire for the Conservative Party to leave the federalist EPP and set up a new right-of-centre Eurosceptic group at the time of the 2009 elections. The main parties were the UK Conservatives and PiS until Brexit. Smaller Eurosceptic parties are also part of the group.

ECR has MEPs from 17 MS: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

Asylum and migration in the ECR manifesto:

- The EU should assist Member States in managing migratory flows while respecting their citizens' consent and forcing them to welcome illegal immigrants.
- Proposal for a comprehensive border security strategy encompassing air, land, and sea borders.
- Enhanced border infrastructure financed collectively by Member States.
- Proactive measures targeting root causes of migration.
- Combatting human trafficking and smuggling, increasing repatriations.
- Establishing regional platforms and collaborating with third countries on migration management.
- Aim to process the majority of international protection applications outside the EU.

- Blocking illegal departures through common naval missions.
- Countering exploitation of migrant flows as a hybrid weapon by neighboring countries.
- Granting asylum exclusively to genuine refugees to prevent abuse of the asylum system.
- Reinforcing agencies like Frontex and Europol to fortify external borders.
- Emphasizing effective integration and respecting European values and ways of life internally.

For the full manifesto [click here](#).

6. Identity and Democracy group (ID - currently holds 59 seats, projected to get 85 seats)

The ID group was created after the 2019 elections and brings together far-right, nationalist political parties, the largest of which are Italy's La Lega, France's National Rally, and Germany's AfD.

ID has MEPs from 8 MS: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, and Italy.

Asylum and migration in the ID manifesto:

No ID manifesto is planned, but according to the vice president of the group, their priorities are based on the group's programmes set out in 2019.

- "Identity: For the ID Group, national identities should be embraced, respected and preserved. That's why it opposes uncontrolled mass immigration and the possible EU accession of a non-European country like Turkey."
- Border: Better protection of the European Union's external borders is necessary. Every nation has the right to protect, control and monitor its own borders. The European Union should do more to effectively return illegal and criminal immigrants to their countries of origin."

For the group's priorities, [click here](#).

7. The Left in the European Parliament (currently holds 37 seats, projected to get 33 seats)

As its name suggests, this group is positioned on the far left of the political spectrum. It contains members from several communist and traditional socialist parties and represents many left-wing environmentalist groups. European Left is a party member in the Left group in the EP.

The Left has MEPs 13 MS: Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Asylum and migration in the European Left manifesto:

- Advocate for ending Frontex and Fortress Europe's policies, which have led to violence, suffering, and torture.
- Reject externalisation of borders, relocation of detention centres, and funding of oppressive regimes.
- Oppose administrative detention and deportation of migrants, demanding cancellation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.
- Call for a Europe without cages, emphasising humane treatment and respect for human rights.
- Base international policy on the UN Charter and resolutions rather than NATO directives.
- Support safe, legal migration channels and improved protection for migrants and asylum seekers.
- Promote peace, stability, and sustainable development in regions of origin to reduce migration.
- Demand a break with Fortress Europe, advocating for legal and safe migration routes and opposing illegal pushbacks.

- Call for a truly European migration and asylum policy based on co-responsibility and solidarity among Member States.
- Demand abrogation of agreements violating fundamental rights and replacement with a common reception system.
- Call for equal treatment irrespective of religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation.
- Demand abolition of the Dublin Agreement and dissolution of Frontex.
- The creation of safe, legal passages to combat the extensive trafficking of human beings and stop human losses in the Mediterranean
- An asylum policy that respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees.
- Demand the abrogation of all agreements and declarations on migration and refugees that violate these fundamental rights, including agreements on the externalisation of European borders, and their replacement with a common reception system in the European Union based on criteria of inter-territorial solidarity and respect for the rights of migrants and refugees.

For the full manifesto, [click here](#).