



Joint Letter on the European Pact on Migration and Asylum and implementation of the Solidarity Mechanism

Dear Commissioner Brunner,

The large majority of migrants arriving in Belgium and the Netherlands do so through unregistered and irregular migration. According to the Schengen Barometer+, at least 60% of asylum applications in both countries result from secondary movements. These high numbers of arrivals have placed significant strain on our reception capacities and asylum systems, which are reaching their limits. What is more, in countries with high population density, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, the arrival of large numbers of migrants puts even greater and more immediate pressure on public services that are already under strain, such as healthcare, education and housing.

Addressing these challenges requires the implementation of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum ('the Pact'), with its carefully crafted balance between increased responsibility and enhanced solidarity among all Member States. This balance must be safeguarded at every stage of the implementation process and will be key in maintaining sufficient political support from all Member States.

In light of the start of the first annual solidarity cycle, the undersigned Ministers wish to emphasise that full compliance with the Dublin system is a prerequisite. Failure to fulfil legal obligations places a disproportionate burden on other Member States' asylum systems and reception capacities, thereby undermining the functioning of the Common European Asylum System, as well as trust in and support for European migration solutions.

We therefore urge the European Commission to ensure substantial progress and the sustainable application of the existing Dublin acquis, with a clear action plan for each Member State and concrete, measurable benchmarks for progress by June 2026. Until substantial progress has been achieved on Dublin transfers, non-compliance should be duly and transparently reflected in the European Commission's implementing decision, by means of the provisions available for this purpose in the Asylum and Migration

Management Regulation, in particular by virtue of Article 60 (3) concerning the identification of systemic shortcomings. Such an assessment can then serve as a basis for Member States to decide not to activate their solidarity pledges towards those failing or refusing to meet their legal obligations, in line with the principle that solidarity must go hand in hand with responsibility.

In addition, the size of the Solidarity Pool should meet the public's expectations and be manageable and realistic, so as not to undermine the validity of the instrument and the Pact itself. It is crucial that the instrument does not exacerbate the existing challenges caused by the medium- and long-term effects of secondary movements and a non-functioning Dublin system. In addition, the size of the pool should reflect the fact that the responsibilities attached to this first cycle will not apply until June 2026.

We wish to reiterate the importance of the successful implementation of the Pact by all Member States. We call on the European Commission to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Pact becomes a driving force in addressing the challenges of asylum and migration across the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

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Minister of Asylum and Migration of the
Netherlands

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