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## **EU: Pact on Migration and Asylum. Von der Leyen (Commission), “European challenge that requires European solutions”**

“Today, the European Parliament and the Council have reached a long-awaited political agreement on the Pact on Migration and Asylum”. One of the first reactions to the agreement reached by the two institutions on the Pact comes from Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. “Migration is a European challenge that requires European solutions”, she said. “Every year, hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants undertake perilous journeys to reach our borders. They are often the victims of criminals, smugglers and traffickers who lure them with false promises of safe passage and extort money from them”. Member States “need to manage illegal migration - often challenging their border protection”, she added. “This Pact on Migration and Asylum will ensure that there is an effective European response to this European challenge. It means that Europeans will decide who comes to the EU and who can stay, not the smugglers. It means protecting those in need”. This Pact “will also ensure that Member States share the effort responsibly, showing solidarity with those that protect our external borders while preventing illegal migration to the EU”. According to President Von der Leyen, the Pact will give “the tools to react rapidly in situations of crisis, when Member States are faced with large numbers of illegal arrivals or instrumentalisation when hostile countries deliberately attempt to destabilise the EU or its Member States”. The president also mentioned other ongoing initiatives. “We are implementing concrete action plans to fight illegal migration through the Mediterranean, the Balkans or the Atlantic. We are building partnerships with countries of origin and transit, to fight smugglers and traffickers and to ensure effective returns to their country of origin of migrants with no right to stay in the EU”.

Valentina Bombelli