

# Share the responsibility at our borders.

## Summary

The EU's external borders are our borders: their control and protection cannot be the responsibility of a handful of states. Let's work together to protect our borders *and* European values at these frontiers. Let's optimise the utilisation of our tax money and resources.

*What will we do first? **Unify all European border control systems and support Frontex to become a common and effective EU Border Protection Agency!***

## Full proposal

### **What's going on?**

Millions of people have sought refuge in Europe in recent years, and thousands have died on their way to safety. Unfortunately, conditions in countries of origin and in refugee camps have not yet improved significantly, which means that further migration movements are expected to continue in the next years. So far the EU and its member states have reacted with piecemeal, hard-fought but non-binding solutions: in the absence of effective EU-wide agreements, member states have acted on their own. This has led to insufficient resources devoted to protect borders or assist those seeking refuge at those borders and at times to excessive use of police and military forces, neglecting to uphold human rights and dignity.

The lack of a clear attribution of competencies and sufficient European-wide border

protection has led to ineffective, inefficient and sometimes inhumane national solutions, such as the reintroduction of internal border controls. National governments de facto suspended the Schengen area of free movement of people and goods overnight, which undermined citizens' trust in the functioning of Europe and tarnished Europe's standing in the world.

### **What's our vision?**

The protection of European borders should become an exclusive competency of the European Union. Current national border protection should be integrated into a coherent and efficient European border protection system. We need a political community that supports all its member states when necessary to protect the common borders. We must insist on a political community that ensures human rights are upheld throughout its territory, including at its borders and beyond.

A functioning protection of the EU border is a prerequisite for the free movement of people within the EU. Therefore, we want to create and support a system that upholds the integrity of the EU border, fights cross-border crime, and ensures the safety of European residents. We want an EU border protection system that provides initial reception of asylum seekers in an orderly and humane way, upholds European values and makes sure that first points of contact with refugees exemplify what European citizens stand for.

### **How do we get there?**

#### **1. Develop the capacities of a fully operational European border protection**

**agency:** We need to develop Frontex from an intergovernmental agency that largely coordinates national services to an integrated European agency with a full mandate and capabilities to act and react. Initially, Frontex will be staffed with its own border guards and equipment through new funds from the EU budget, to act independently of member states' contributions. Initially, it will conduct joint

trainings for national border guards. Later this will develop into an integration of national structures into the European agency in order to avoid the inefficiencies that come from duplication.

2. **Ensure European Parliamentary scrutiny:** Competencies and budgets need to be clarified between EU institutions and member states in order to increase transparency, while ensuring that mixed accountabilities between national and European parliaments are a matter of the past. Ultimately, there needs to be clear parliamentary control by the European Parliament of Frontex and the future European border protection agency.
3. **Ensure the protection of values at our borders.** The protection of our borders goes hand in hand with the protection of our shared values. It is here that people from all over the world receive their first impression of Europe. Their aspirations for building a better life in Europe must be encouraged by how we welcome them; they must always be treated with respect and in a dignified way. Therefore, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights should be a guidepost for the agency, incorporated in its mission statement, compliance system and accountability to the European Parliament. The disruption of human smuggling and trafficking networks should always go hand in hand with search and rescue operations as well as welcoming operations for asylum seekers and refugees.
4. **The ongoing intra-Schengen border controls should stop immediately** and the personnel involved in controlling intra-Schengen borders should instead be deployed to the external borders on a rotating basis, with extra compensation for being far away from home. Countries without an external border should commit a quota of personnel to the external border based on their population size. Where this turns out not to be feasible, countries should provide extra funding for the protection of the external border instead.