

# **BACKGROUND: EU immigration pact: key points**

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Cannes, France - The "Pact on immigration and asylum" proposed by the French government, which currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency, covers the following key points:**LEGAL IMMIGRATION:** the pact calls on EU member states to create policies of "targeted immigration" by making their countries more attractive for highly-qualified foreigners, making it easier for immigrants to send money home and ultimately return home themselves, and setting stricter rules on bringing in migrants' families.

It also urges member states to boost integration, "balancing the rights of migrants with their duties," such as learning the local language and respecting "European values" such as human rights, women's rights and the duty to send children to school.

**ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION:** at the same time, the pact calls on member states to crack down on illegal immigration by measures such as expelling illegal entrants, paying them to leave voluntarily and signing return deals with their countries of origin.

Early drafts of the pact urged member states to avoid mass regularizations of illegals - a clause widely seen as a reproach to Spain, which carried out a high-profile mass legalization in 2005.

The clause has been watered down from earlier drafts, however, allowing Spain to say that the pact as a whole supports its general policy on migrants.

**BORDER CONTROLS:** the pact further calls on EU member states to strengthen their border controls, offering "solidarity" to those frontier states which have particular problems, and to bring in biometric visas for all entrants by 2012.

Here, too, the pact calls for closer cooperation with countries beyond the EU's borders to crack down on illegal migration.

**ASYLUM POLICY:** the pact urges the EU to "build a Europe of asylum" by creating an EU support office aimed at harmonizing the currently widely-differing asylum practices in Europe and analysing the prospect of creating a common asylum procedure.

It also calls for more cooperation with non-EU countries which currently host large numbers of asylum seekers, and a stronger EU resettlement policy to bring genuine refugees into Europe.

**THIRD COUNTRIES:** finally, the pact calls on EU member states to pay more attention to migration questions in their foreign affairs, offering aid so that third-country nationals feel less need to leave their homes and third-country governments can better deal with illegal migration.

It also calls on member states to offer third-country nationals the chance to work in the country legally and to promote "temporary migration," encouraging the migrants not to stay for ever.