



Europe's failed unity on the Global Compact on migration is undermining EU's ability to shape the new global order

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Statement by

On Monday, the UN's Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration was agreed by the majority of UN states, following 18 months of debate.



However, some EU countries have pulled out of the process: the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Slovakia and Austria, which

currently holds the EU presidency.

These countries have turned on their heels and abandoned the first ever international deal on the migration crisis, a deal reached by 164 nations and which has put in place a new solidarity mechanism.

I would have expected more responsible behaviour from these European countries, given that we recently celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the longstanding commitment it represents on the part of the world's nations.

As a result of this declaration, over the past 70 years millions of people have been afforded the dignity they deserve, untold human suffering has been prevented and the foundations have been laid for a more just world.

In line with this tradition, the Global Compact is a landmark deal that will enable nations to work together so as to ensure that migration is safe and well managed, rather than irregular and dangerous. We all know far too well in Europe that national policies are much more likely to succeed with international cooperation.

The governments that have signed up to the UN compact have dismissed the notion that migration is bad, and countries like Germany, France and Spain have – in the words of one negotiator – "pushed back the darkness for migrants".

I would have hoped that all the EU Member States could have demonstrated the same foresight and courage.

Europe's largest migration crisis since the Second World War is likely to become the mother of all challenges that the EU is currently facing. If EU leaders fail to deal with it, Europe faces irreparable political demise.

Migration is not a European problem, but a global one, which Europe can help solve and in so doing gain greater clout in shaping the new world order.

When I see right-wing movements across Europe and the US taking to social media to condemn the Global Compact, exposing their anti-immigrant, nativist agenda and rejecting multilateralism and international institutions, I can only remark that they are disregarding the needs of EU citizens in favour of opportunistic politics.

If in a country like Belgium the government was in danger of collapse over support for the Global Compact, for fear of infringing state sovereignty or being seen to promote migration, it can only be because the pact was misused to spread lies.

Today at the EESC we have adopted an own-initiative opinion on [the cost of non-immigration and non-integration](#).

A non-immigration scenario in Europe would mean among other things that Member States' economies would suffer substantially; demographic challenges would be aggravated; pension systems might become unsustainable; and racism and xenophobia would flourish even more than they are doing at present.

Non-integration bears economic, socio-cultural and political risks and costs. Therefore investing in the integration of migrants is the best insurance policy against potential future costs, problems and tensions.

Let me be clear: without solidarity, Europe risks creating irreparable divisions, which will further feed political discontent and provide greater ammunition for nationalists.

