

EU adopts far-right agenda in migration policy

Lena Sokoll
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The European Union is once again tightening its migration and asylum policy, and far-right parties are setting the pace. With deprivation of liberty and deportations to third countries, the fundamental rights of people seeking protection who have reached Europe are being violated.

At the end of March, the new Return Regulation was passed in the European Parliament as part of the tightened EU asylum policy (Common European Asylum System—CEAS). In essence, it undermines the rights of migrants seeking protection who have found their way to the countries of the European Union. If they come from supposedly “safe third countries,” they are to be denied access to a fair asylum procedure. They will face detention, faster and harsher deportation against which they cannot effectively defend themselves and internment in countries with which they have no connection whatsoever.

Arbitrary detention

In the future, EU member states will be able to place migrants considered obliged to leave the country in deportation detention for up to 24 months. Previously, six months was the maximum period for the detention of rejected asylum seekers deemed to be prone to absconding. New criteria are being introduced that establish a risk of absconding or a “security risk” much more quickly. They thus are deemed to justify deportation detention. This will apply, for example, to people who have used forged documents during their flight, or who, in the opinion of the authorities, do not cooperate sufficiently in obtaining travel documents or verifying their identity.

The maximum deportation detention of two years can be extended indefinitely if it is judged that a refugee poses a “security risk.” No criminal conviction is required for this. The categorization of a refugee as a “security risk” can be based solely on the determination of the authorities.

This opens the door to arbitrary state action and represents a significant violation of the basic rights of asylum seekers in Europe. It is a clear breach of Article 6 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, which grants everyone the right to liberty.

Pro Asyl, the largest German-based immigration advocacy

organization, commented:

Overall, it is to be feared that with the planned expansion of deportation detention, a great many people will be deprived of their liberty for a disproportionately long time—and solely because they do not currently have a valid residence permit.

Indeed, the freedoms and fundamental rights of all people—native-born or immigrant—are deeply threatened when representatives of the state can arbitrarily detain vulnerable groups or unpopular individuals. Such a practice is characteristic of dictatorships.

With the new Return Regulation, the EU is also establishing legal grounds for the creation and operation of so-called “Return Hubs” in third countries outside Europe. At a meeting in Cyprus in January, EU interior ministers agreed on a concept of “safe third countries.” Rejected asylum seekers are to be deported more easily to these countries in future, even if there is no personal connection whatsoever—for example through family, friends or previous stays—and even if the country was not on the flight route of those seeking protection.

German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt (Christian Social Union, CSU) is a strong supporter of this idea and has formed a “core group” involving EU Commissioner Magnus Brunner (Austrian Peoples Party, ÖVP) and member states the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece and Austria to get these camps for deportees on other continents underway. Which countries are currently involved in negotiations is unknown, but various African countries have already been brought into play. The Netherlands concluded an agreement with Uganda in 2025 for the establishment of a return hub. NBC News reports that discussions with Kenya are underway to accept rejected asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Syria. Dobrindt has announced the commissioning of return hubs before the end of 2026.

The Return Regulation does not prescribe concrete standards for the detention or provision of care for the affected people in third countries. Formally, only third countries are supposed to be considered where international human rights standards and the ban on deportation under international law are upheld. The so-called “non-refoulement” principle bans deportation to states where persecution threatens. But the formal declaration is unlikely to be

worth the paper it is written on. The EU has been cooperating for years with states that are internationally criticised for their disregard of human rights standards, such as Tunisia, Niger, Egypt and Libya.

The draft version of the Return Regulation initially stipulated that minors, accompanied and unaccompanied, should not be deported to such third countries. The European Parliament and the member states have altered the regulation and created the possibility for children and their families to be deported to the return hubs. This is a clear breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which places the best interests of children and their protection at the centre, grants them freedom and rights and explicitly forbids punishment based on the status of their parents.

The vote in the European Parliament on the Return Regulation was more than just approval of a legal framework for systematic human rights violations. It was also a test run for the direct cooperation of the “conservative” parliamentary group in the European People’s Party (EPP) with the openly far-right parties, such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD). The parliamentary positions on EU migration laws, which were decided in the context of the new CEAS in recent weeks, were negotiated between the EPP and extreme right-wing faction groups in online chats and personal meetings, according to research by the DPA news agency. Accordingly, the EPP and the right wing formed a voting majority for the previously tightened version when the Return Regulation was passed.

Right-wing factions in the European Parliament cheered frantically when the new rules were passed, celebrating their success in pushing through a regulation that tramples on the rights of people seeking protection. They also celebrated their de facto coalition with the EPP, which raises the prospect of entering government in influential EU member states such as Germany.

The party and faction leader of the EPP, Manfred Weber, is simultaneously deputy chairman of the CSU and, like his party colleague Alexander Dobrindt, stands for a policy of “utmost severity” against migrants. As early as 2018 he pleaded for cooperation with Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to achieve “the final solution to the refugee question” at the EU level. In December 2025, looking ahead, he defended a future joint vote with far-right members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on immigration policy in a press interview, declaring, “We will not let anyone stop us from halting illegal migration and securing our prosperity.”

Weber had already overseen a similar collaboration between the EPP and the extreme right in October 2024 with the decision to upgrade the EU’s external borders, as well as in November 2025 with the watering down of the European supply chain law. The EPP report on the current Return Regulation names the MEPs who collaborated on the document—including AfD MEP Mary Khan for the extreme right-wing faction “Europe of Sovereign Nations”. Thus, the European Parliament provides the forum in which a possible future German government coalition of CDU/CSU and AfD is already taking shape.

The working class must defend migrants and refugees

Migration policy is an indicator of the transition of bourgeois governments into authoritarian regimes. The EU likes to commend itself in Sunday speeches for being democratic and liberal, but in its asylum policy it openly shows its reactionary face.

The EU systematically disregards the human rights of refugees and accepts mass deaths at the external Mediterranean border and elsewhere, even promoting them through pushbacks and similar practices. It cooperates openly with criminal organisations like the Libyan “coastguard” in refugee deterrence. The treatment of vulnerable groups such as refugees is an indicator of how far governments are departing from officially recognized human rights and guaranteed freedoms.

A parallel to Trump’s treatment of migrants in the US is obvious and not accidental. The mass detention and deportation of people considered “irregular migrants” is the political lever with which Trump and his henchmen are dismantling fundamental rights. Trump relies on a network of compliant autocratic regimes, such as El Salvador, to deport migrants to “third countries.” The brutal murders of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, committed by Trump’s ICE immigration police, have shown the global public that such terror serves to intimidate the entire population.

In Europe and worldwide, the ruling class is increasingly resorting to forms of authoritarian rule, as war and the destruction of welfare state structures inevitably lead to resistance in the population. Governments are preparing to take off the gloves against their own populations in the current and upcoming struggles for raw materials and markets, and to suppress the demands of the working class for its share of the social wealth.

The working class must defend refugees and migrants in Europe and worldwide not simply out of pity, but out of a common interest. Any division along national and ethnic lines weakens the working class. It can effectively defend its democratic rights, social standards and freedoms only if it is united and fights for global equality, i.e., for an international socialist alternative to exploitation and oppression.



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