

3.2. Managing migration at external borders

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icon for border procedures

Another core component of the Pact is increased effectiveness in the management of arrivals at the EU's external borders through fast and efficient procedures for asylum and returns. A key element to accomplish this is the seamless and harmonious functioning of screening, the asylum border procedure and the return border procedure, especially considering the short time limits of 7 days for screening, 12 weeks for the asylum border procedure and 12 weeks for the return border procedure. At the same time, emphasis is placed on strong individual safeguards and guarantees for fundamental rights.

Throughout 2025, EU+ countries continued legislative work and set up these processes by building needed facilities, ensuring adequate capacity, developing guidance and practical tools, and providing training – including in using the new IT systems – to professionals who will implement the news tasks.94 For example in April 2025, the Minister for Justice in Ireland secured Cabinet approval for a new International Protection Bill to replace the 2015 Act and operationalise the border procedure in national law, as set out in the APR. The aim is to issue decisions as quickly as possible to those who are less likely to have an entitlement to international protection. The bill also established an independent monitoring mechanism to ensure that the screening process and the application of the border procedure are in compliance with EU and international laws.95

In Germany, two laws were adopted by the Germany Bundestag in February 2026 and approved by the Bundesrat in March 2026 to operationalise new CEAS provisions into national law, including the new border procedure, return border procedure, screening and Eurodac.96 In October 2025, both Iceland and Norway launched public consultations on their respective bills for the introduction of screening of third-country nationals at external borders.97 Similarly, in January 2026 the Ministry of the Interior in Slovakia put forth a new law on international protection which aligns the country's asylum legislation with the provisions of the Pact, providing the legal framework in national law for border procedures.99 In parallel, countries worked to establish facilities for screening and accommodation arrangements in the context of the border procedure.100

Civil society organisations highlighted the need to effectively ensure adequate reception conditions and the provision of legal advice and counselling for applicants at the borders; respect for fundamental rights, especially in view of strict time limits; and the independence of monitoring mechanisms.101

The European Commission and EU Agencies provided substantial support to EU+ countries in this process. A screening toolbox was developed jointly by Frontex, the EUAA and the Commission, with the support of Europol and national experts, to provide professionals in the field with a set of user-friendly templates, guidance materials and practical resources.102 The EUAA prepared a blueprint to support Member States in planning and building specialised or multifunctional centres where screening, asylum and return procedures are applied at the border.

Applying the new rules through simulated scenarios serves an important role. To this end, Frontex, the EUAA, Europol and Italian authorities undertook a 2-week trial of the EU's new screening process in Lampedusa. A similar pilot exercise was carried out in Romania. Thus, stakeholders were able to test the screening toolbox in real operational conditions and assess health and vulnerability checks, biometric registration and the security check. Subsequently, inter-agency coordination and workflows were further refined.103

European countries also introduced initiatives to align national legislation with the updated Schengen Borders Code.104 Consistent efforts were made to increase contingency planning and preparedness through enhanced coordination among key actors. In November 2025, the Swiss Federal Council approved targeted measures to improve cooperation between federal and cantonal authorities involved in the management of borders, with a particular focus on improving risk analysis. The country also requested additional financing to this end from the European Commission's Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (IGFV).105

In conjunction with its national strategy for asylum and migration, in October 2025 Luxembourg adopted a national strategy for integrated external border management based on the Frontex regulation. In Portugal, the National Foreigners and Borders Unit was established within the Public Security Police to coordinate and implement actions related to border management.106

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