

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003030/25
to the Commission
Marieke Ehlers (P/E), Afroditi Latinopoulou (P/E)
(22 July 2025)

Subject: Massive surge in irregular arrivals to Greek islands and the adequacy of the EU's legal and policy framework

According to recent reports by *Politico*, over 9 000 individuals have arrived illegally on the Greek island of Crete from Libya since the beginning of 2025 — nearly double the total number recorded in 2024, with the majority arriving in recent weeks.

1. Can the Commission confirm the accuracy of these figures, and does it possess comparable data on illegal arrivals to other Greek islands, including the islands in the Aegean Sea?
2. In the light of such developments, does the Commission consider the EU's current Pact on Migration and Asylum sufficiently capable of managing large-scale maritime arrivals, or does it acknowledge the need to reconsider elements of the broader international legal framework, including possible amendments to the 1951 Geneva Convention?
3. Would the Commission support proposals to declare inadmissible all asylum applications submitted within EU territory by nationals of countries designated as safe non-EU countries, and instead allow access to protection through external processing, such as in embassies or consular posts abroad?

Submitted: 22.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(22 September 2025)

According to the European Border and Coast guard Agency (Frontex) ⁽¹⁾, between 1 January and 31 July 2025, 26 212 irregular border crossings along the Eastern Mediterranean route, including into Crete and islands in the Aegean Sea, were detected, a decrease of 16% compared to the same period in 2024.

Despite the decrease, the number of irregular arrivals from Libya to Crete reached over 10 000 in the same period, more than four times the total compared to 2024. The Commission continues to monitor the situation very closely and will remain in close cooperation with the Greek authorities.

The 1951 Geneva Convention is the cornerstone of the international protection system, and the EU's asylum policy is aligned with its principles.

The Pact on Migration and Asylum ⁽²⁾, which will enter into application in June 2026, includes several innovative and complementary measures to ensure preparedness, contingency planning and crisis response across the EU. It also addresses the cases where a Member State is confronted with a disproportionate number of arrivals.

Under EU law, individuals have the right to seek asylum within the territory of a Member State. The safe third country concept allows Member States to reject applications for international protection if applicants can receive effective protection in a third country that is considered safe for them.

The Commission proposal to revise the safe third country concept ⁽³⁾ aims to facilitate the application of this concept by providing more flexibility while maintaining strong safeguards.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/eu-external-borders-irregular-crossings-down-18-in-the-first-7-months-of-2025-ArNz2R>.

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, COM(2020) 609 final.

⁽³⁾ Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 as regards the application of the 'safe third country' concept, COM(2025) 259 final.