

# REGULAR MIGRATION PATHWAYS: A GLOBAL CALL FOR ACTION

Commissioner Johansson

(5 minutes)

Dear Director-General Amy Pope,

Dear Presidents, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very glad in my last days as European Commissioner for Home Affairs to join this global call for action. It is high time we put legal migration high on the global agenda.

And building partnerships with the international community to manage migration has been a key priority in my mandate, and IOM plays a key role in areas like legal pathways, voluntary return and reintegration.

In the EU, we recognise the **invaluable contribution of migrants to our economy and society**. Promoting legal pathways is part of the comprehensive EU migration policy that we have agreed on with the **Pact on Migration and Asylum** adopted this year, a historic achievement.

I could tell you **countless stories of migrants** who have made the EU their home. For example,

the prize last year for the best baguette in Paris was awarded to Tharshan Selvarajah. After 15 years in France, he is now baking bread for the President. In my own country, 35% of doctors and 14% of **nurses** come from outside **Sweden**.

**Stepping up legal migration** is going to be one of the next big challenges for Europe, with population growing old and with skills shortages. By 2050, Europe's working population will drop by more than thirty million people. Two third of Europe's businesses can't find the skilled people they need.

Migration is not the only solution. We need to reskill, upskill, activate excluded people. Women. But migration is a key part of the policy mix.

And essential to boost our competitiveness on a global scale.

While labour migration is mainly a national competence, the Commission has been **facilitating legal pathways for migrants**. Let me highlight 2 initiatives:

First, **Talent Partnerships**, help to attract talent to the EU by matching labour market needs with those of a partner country, a win-win. We have them with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Specific sectors have been identified,

with the private sector. This month for instance we have started a training with EU support for **2,000 young Tunisians** in the construction industry in Italy.

Second, my proposal to have an **EU Talent Pool** will make available to employers the first EU-wide platform for international recruitment.

In addition, the EU and Member States are also supporting **refugees' labour pathways**. For **2024 and 2025**, 14 Member-States pledged a total of 61000 places for resettlement and humanitarian admission. **Spain** for example has put forward a refugee labour scheme with a target of **2,000 admissions** from Latin America over the next two years.

People risk their lives in deadly journeys because there are no legal alternatives.

At the same time, we can get more support for legal pathways if we improve returns and reduce irregular migration.

This work on legal pathways is not possible without the **comprehensive strategic migration partnerships** with priority countries of origin and transit **to manage migration, along routes**. In these partnerships, we are addressing irregular migration with **effective and fair return for those with no right to stay**. *IOM has facilitated for*

*example the voluntary return of almost 24,000 persons from North Africa to their countries of origin and has provided reintegration support to almost 37,000 migrants.*

One year ago, the Commission launched the **Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling** to step up international cooperation to combat smuggling effectively. It is crucial that IOM and partners from across the globe build further on the Alliance, which will continue to be a priority of the next Commission.

And in part thanks to these partnerships, **irregular migration** is declining. This year so far **190,000 people** came to Europe irregularly. That's **40% less than last year.**

At the same time many **more people come in regular ways.** Last year, Member States issued **3.7 million residence permits.** That's nearly twenty times more.

Let me conclude by saying that there must be zero tolerance for the **exploitation of irregular migrants.** We must always protect migrants, and protect workers rights.

Thank you.