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Policy Brief

EU Pact on Migration

Beyond border control to long-term inclusion

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Why this policy brief?

As EU Member States put the Pact on Migration and Asylum into practice, SOLIDAR is publishing this brief to keep the long-term inclusion of migrants and refugees on the policy agenda. Produced as part of SOLIDAR's Bridging the Gap for a Social and Sustainable Europe 2026–2029 (BRIDGE) programme, the brief draws on the European Pillar of Social Rights and provides a practical checklist for SOLIDAR members and other civil society organisations, including migrants-led organisations. It supports them in monitoring national implementation, identifying gaps in access to rights and essential services and using that evidence to advocate for changes at national and EU level.

01 Background

The adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2020 marked a significant milestone in the European Union's efforts to establish a more coherent and sustainable framework for managing migration. While much of the political debate surrounding the Pact has focused on border management, asylum procedures and responsibility-sharing between Member States, its long-term success will only depend on the ability of the European Union to ensure the social inclusion of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection.

For SOLIDAR, inclusion is not a secondary aspect of migration governance, but a fundamental condition for building cohesive and democratic societies. **SOLIDAR's vision** goes beyond emergency responses and fragmented policies, recognising migration as a permanent and enriching dimension of European life. At a time when EU migration policy is increasingly centred on migration management, border control and returns, there is a growing risk that the implementation of the Pact will reinforce this approach at the expense of inclusion.

This policy brief aims to support SOLIDAR members and civil society organisations in understanding and monitoring how inclusion is addressed alongside the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum at national level.

While the Pact establishes a common framework for asylum and migration management, its implementation takes place within a broader policy environment shaped by existing EU and national frameworks on integration, inclusion and social rights. The analysis therefore examines key policy areas that influence migrants' inclusion outcomes, including access to housing, education and language training, employment, social services and participation in society. Particular attention is paid to the role of civil society organisations, which often serve as essential service providers, advocates and bridges between migrants and public authorities.

02 Implementing the Pact: what does it mean for inclusion?

Migration and asylum have been central challenges for the EU over the past decade. The 2015 refugee displacement exposed longstanding weaknesses in the EU asylum and migration system, particularly regarding responsibility-sharing, access to protection and reception conditions. Subsequent pressures - including the COVID-19 pandemic and the displacement of people from Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 - further highlighted both the challenges facing national asylum systems and the EU's capacity to mobilise common responses[1].

Against this backdrop, the European Commission presented the **New Pact on Migration and Asylum** in September 2020.

Following several years of negotiations, the Pact was adopted in May 2024, with its new rules entering into application on 12 June 2026[2]. It aims to establish a more coordinated framework for managing migration and asylum through common procedures, strengthened responsibility-sharing and solidarity between Member States.

> **"Effective implementation requires more than legislative and administrative changes."**

From proposal to implementation

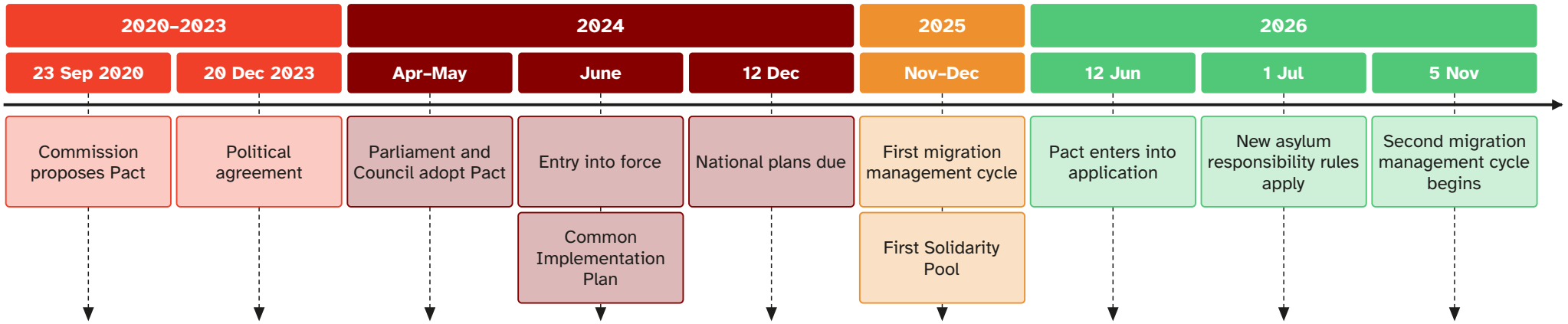


Figure 1 | EU Pact on Migration Timeline | Source: European Commission

1 The Parliament Magazine article "What you need to know about the EU's migration pact", February 2026.
2 EU Parliament briefing on the "Implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum", February 2025.

Implementation has been guided by the **Common Implementation Plan**, published in June 2024, which sets out ten building blocks covering the legislative, administrative and operational changes required across Member States. **National Implementation Plans** (NIPs) were subsequently developed to translate these priorities into national reforms, alongside investments in infrastructure and capacity. However, effective implementation requires more than legislative and administrative changes. It depends on adequate institutional capacity, resources, sustained funding and effective coordination between Member States, the European Commission and EU agencies.

This is particularly important from an inclusion perspective. **While the EU has committed significant resources to migration, border management and internal security, concerns remain about whether sufficient funding is reaching asylum, integration and inclusion**[3]. As the Pact enters into application, the focus is therefore shifting from legislative preparation to implementation in practice. Yet national preparations have generally placed greater emphasis on asylum procedures, screening, border management and reception capacity than on the measures needed to support migrants' and refugees' long-term social and economic inclusion.

Beyond formal compliance with the new rules, effective inclusion requires access to housing, education and language learning, employment, social protection and essential services, supported by adequate funding, institutional capacity and meaningful civil society participation. The analysis therefore assesses whether national preparations are sufficient to translate Pact implementation into effective and rights-based inclusion in practice.

a. Linkages between the EU Pact on Migration and the European Pillar of Social Rights

Inclusion is essential to ensuring that migrants and refugees can participate fully in the economic, social, cultural and civic life of their host societies. At EU level, the **European Commission's 2021 - 2027 Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion** is guided by the principle of "inclusion for all" and identifies four key areas for action: education and training, employment and skills, health and housing. It also emphasises mainstream policies and targeted support, multi-stakeholder cooperation, access to EU funding, participation and the monitoring of progress[4].

" Inclusion is essential to ensuring that migrants and refugees can participate fully in the economic, social, cultural and civic life of their host societies. "

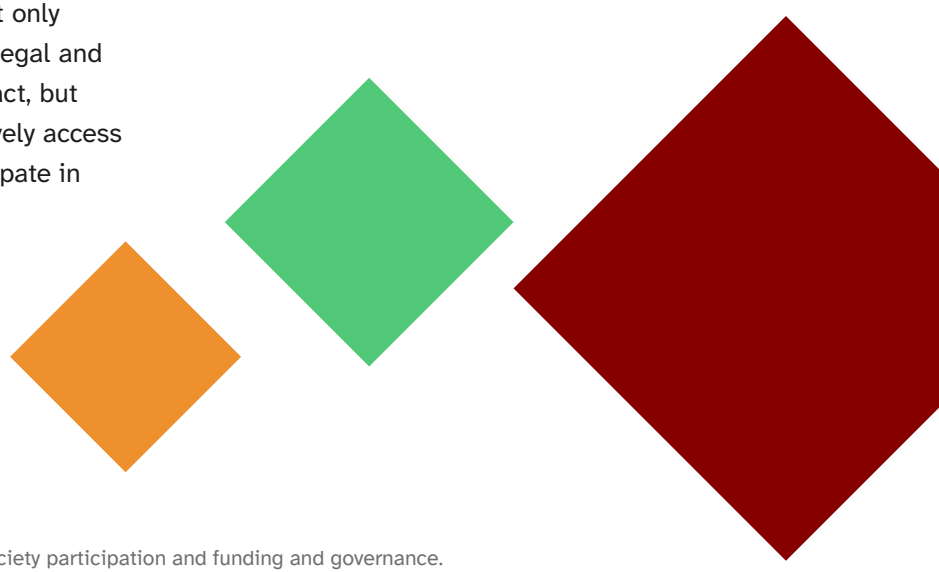
3 SOLIDAR Briefing Paper on "The price of shifting priorities: a bad start for the next EU budget", November 2025.
4 EU Commission Progress Tracker: Progress tracker: Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027, March 2025.

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** (EPSR) provides a complementary social policy framework for assessing whether the implementation of the Pact can deliver meaningful inclusion. Its 20 principles[5] cover equal opportunities, education, employment, social protection and inclusion, and access to essential services. Several principles are particularly relevant to migrants and refugees and provide a basis for assessing the seven dimensions[6] examined in this policy brief:

- Education and language training are linked to Principle 1, which establishes the right to education, training and lifelong learning.
- Equal opportunities are reflected in Principle 3, which guarantees equal treatment and opportunities in employment, social protection, education and access to goods and services.
- Labour market inclusion relates to Principles 4 and 5, covering active support to employment and secure and adaptable employment.
- Social protection is addressed by Principle 12, which establishes the right to adequate social protection.
- Healthcare is covered by Principle 16, which guarantees timely access to affordable and quality preventive and curative healthcare.

Together, these principles provide a social rights-based lens through which to assess Pact implementation, connecting migration and asylum policies with the broader EU commitment to social inclusion and equal access to rights. They also reinforce the importance of considering not only whether Member States have adopted the legal and administrative measures required by the Pact, but whether migrants and refugees can effectively access the rights and services necessary to participate in society.

This approach is particularly relevant given concerns that Pact implementation may prioritise border management, asylum procedures, returns and detention capacity over long-term inclusion. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) has highlighted uneven preparedness across Member States, including shortcomings in reception capacity, legal counselling, effective remedies, staffing and independent monitoring[7]. Meaningful involvement of civil society organisations is therefore essential, both to monitor implementation and to support migrants and refugees in accessing their rights and essential services.



5 European Commission "What are the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights?".
6 The seven dimensions are: national integration strategy; housing; education and language; employment; social services; civil society participation and funding and governance.
7 European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) statement on Pact Implementation, June 2026.

b. How can SOLIDAR members and other CSOs contribute to the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration looking at its long-term inclusion?

The framework presented in this policy brief offers a practical monitoring and advocacy tool for SOLIDAR members and civil society organisations more broadly. The checklist on page 6 can support these organisations in assessing national implementation of the Pact's inclusion dimension, identifying gaps and developing evidence-based advocacy messages.

Area	Guiding questions
National implementation and integration strategy	Is the National Implementation Plan publicly available? Does it contain explicit and measurable objectives on inclusion and integration? Is it aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion?
Housing	Are migrants and refugees able to access adequate and affordable housing? Are administrative barriers, discrimination and barriers to registration being addressed? Does Pact-related funding support longer-term housing solutions, beyond reception capacity?
Education and language learning	Is early access to language learning and education guaranteed? Are children able to access mainstream education without unnecessary delays or segregation? Are vocational training, skills recognition and childcare adequately supported?
Employment	Can migrants and refugees access employment without unnecessary administrative restrictions or delays? Are foreign qualifications and skills effectively recognised? Are measures in place to prevent discrimination, exploitation and precarious employment?

Social services and essential services	Is early and effective access to healthcare, social protection and other essential services guaranteed? Can people access services regardless of administrative, linguistic, digital or territorial barriers? Are accessible in-person services available alongside digital systems?
Vulnerability and access to rights	Are vulnerabilities identified early, individually and through appropriate multidisciplinary procedures? Are people effectively referred to healthcare, psychosocial, legal and protection services? Are legal assistance, appeal rights and judicial remedies accessible throughout asylum procedures?
Civil society participation	Are civil society organisations and migrant-led organisations formally involved in Pact implementation? Can they access reception facilities and relevant information? Are they involved in monitoring, evaluation and independent rights-monitoring mechanisms?
Funding and governance	What resources are allocated to inclusion compared with procedural, border-management and enforcement capacity? Is funding for housing, education, employment, healthcare, legal assistance and social protection sufficient and transparent? Can local and regional authorities and CSOs access stable, flexible and sustainable funding?
Participation and accountability	Are permanent consultation mechanisms in place at national, regional and local levels? Are migrants and refugees themselves involved in policy design and monitoring? Are implementation outcomes and inclusion indicators publicly reported?
Measuring inclusion outcomes	Are Member States measuring not only procedural outputs, but also inclusion outcomes? Are indicators used to assess access to housing, education, employment, healthcare, social protection and participation? Is progress monitored over time and used to adapt policies and funding?

This checklist is intended as a starting point for national monitoring rather than a formal scoring system.
Members can use it to identify evidence gaps, collect examples from practice and formulate concrete recommendations for national and EU decision-makers.

03 SOLIDAR Key Asks

SOLIDAR calls on the European Commission and Member States to ensure that the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum delivers not only effective migration management, but also effective access to rights and long-term social inclusion. Five headline asks summarise the priorities that SOLIDAR members can use in meetings, consultations, statements and advocacy activities:

01
Put inclusion at the centre of Pact implementation:
National Implementation Plans should include clear and measurable inclusion objectives covering housing, education and language learning, employment, healthcare, social protection and participation, aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

02
Guarantee early and equal access to rights and essential services:
Migrants and refugees should have effective access to housing, education, healthcare, employment, social protection and legal assistance from an early stage, with particular attention to removing administrative, linguistic, digital and territorial barriers.

03
Make civil society participation a permanent part of Pact governance:
Civil society organisations, including migrant-led organisations, should be formally involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Pact, with meaningful access to decision-making processes, reception facilities and relevant information.

04
Align funding with inclusion objectives:
EU and national funding should adequately resource inclusion alongside asylum and migration management. Funding for housing, education, employment, healthcare, legal assistance and social protection should be transparent, predictable, multiannual and accessible to local authorities and civil society organisations.

05
Measure what matters – inclusion outcomes:
The implementation of the Pact should be monitored not only through indicators of processing capacity, border procedures and returns, but also through measurable outcomes on access to rights and social inclusion. Member States should regularly report on progress and address identified gaps.

SOLIDAR is a European and worldwide network of civil society organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. Our over 50 member organisations are based in 27 countries (19 of which are EU countries) and include national CSOs in Europe, as non-EU, EU-wide and organisations active at the international level.

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