



2026 **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

Simplification, Implementation & Enforcement

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Internal Affairs and Migration*



1. Introduction

The second year of the Commission's simplification agenda saw the entry into application of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the progressive entry into full operation of the interoperability architecture (Entry/Exit System) and a number of initiatives being launched to put ProtectEU into practice. We also adopted the [first European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy](#), introduced the first-ever [EU Visa Strategy](#), while continuing to actively support Ukraine, proposing another [extension of the Temporary Protection Directive](#) (TPD) for people fleeing from Ukraine. This report, which covers the period from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026, sheds light on how this year's work in my portfolio fits with our common objective to simplify, implement better and, where necessary, enforce.

2. Executive Summary

This year's work on simplification built on that of last year where we had identified areas where laws could be made simpler, clearer and better enforced. I have been paying particular attention to simplifying processes by **digitalisation**, for example in the field of border management, visa, asylum and return procedures.

To ensure the highest standards of **external border management**, thereby maintaining a well-functioning and secure Schengen area, DG HOME has worked closely with Member States and eu-LISA towards the implementation of the EU's interoperable border IT systems, including in particular the **Entry/Exit System** (EES), which became operational on 10 April 2026, the **European Travel Authorisation System** (ETIAS) and the revised **Visa Information System** (VIS). Interoperability ensures that EU law enforcement, border control and migration authorities have fast and seamless access to data stored in all the systems for cross-checking, that services are provided efficiently while also reducing costs, and that enhanced internal security throughout the EU and the Schengen Area is ensured.

To support and steer Member States on the **implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum**, I have been closely involved in efforts to help Member States to be ready for its entry into application on 12 June 2026. Overall, considerable progress has been made over the last years in implementing this large and complex framework. One of the main elements of the Pact providing effective support to those Member States that are under migratory pressure, is the mandatory but flexible solidarity mechanism working on the basis of an annual migration management cycle. In November 2025, the Commission adopted the **first annual Asylum and Migration Report** giving an overview of the migration and asylum situation in the EU and its Member States. This report identified an improvement in the migratory situation in the EU until June 2025 and also pointed at remaining challenges in relation to irregular arrivals, movements within the EU, the hosting of people fleeing the war in Ukraine, tackling the weaponisation of migration, and cooperation with third countries on returns and readmission.

At the same time, as prescribed by the rules of the Pact, in order to decide which Member State could benefit from solidarity, the Commission assessed which Member States are under migratory pressure, at risk of such pressure or facing a significant migratory situation, and made a proposal for a Council Implementing Act that includes the solidarity contributions required for the upcoming year. In December 2025, the Council adopted the **first Solidarity Pool** for 2026 under the annual migration management cycle.

My services and I have also been actively supporting the implementation of various Directives and Regulations in the area of **internal security**, including through specific guidelines, bilateral contacts with Member States, as well as a series of workshops and conferences aimed to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices between law enforcement authorities of the Member States, and to provide technical guidance.

I also hosted two implementation dialogues on key topics within my portfolio. On 11 December 2025, I hosted my **second implementation dialogue** during this mandate, which focused on **Talent Attraction and Retention** to identify solutions to enhance the EU's ability to attract and retain talent from outside the Union and increase its competitiveness. On 19 June 2026, I hosted my **third implementation dialogue**, on the Implementation of the **mandates of Home Affairs Agencies**, to identify ways to facilitate cooperation between them and ensure full complementarity of their work in their respective areas of competence.

During the reporting period, my services contributed to the **enforcement** of EU law, by assessing the completeness and correctness of national transposition measures for Directives and the correct application of national law transposing Directives and of Regulations by the Member States in areas under my responsibility. To ensure uniform implementation of EU rules across the Union, the **enforcement work** covered legislation on firearms, money laundering, explosives precursors, child sexual abuse, attacks against information systems, information exchange between law enforcement authorities, resilience of critical entities, data protection rules concerning terrorist offences, countering migrant smuggling, entry and residence of highly qualified workers and seasonal workers and the format for visas and residence permits. Where appropriate, my services supported Member States in fully transposing and applying the law, and, where necessary, infringement procedures, including referrals to the Court of Justice to the European Union, were adopted. The [Europa webpage](#) on infringement cases, pre-infringement dialogues and transposition of directives provides up-to-date statistical information on the Commission's enforcement activities and Member States' compliance with EU law, including trends per policy area, topic and Member State.

3. Delivering results: Key measures

A. Simplification and costs savings

- Under my steer, DG HOME has continued to respond to the Member States' calls to address the EU's growing challenges in ensuring internal security and managing its borders and migration fairly and effectively, in line with the approach detailed in the [Communication for A Simpler and Faster Europe](#). While the rules falling under the Home Affairs portfolio have not been earmarked, by the Commission, for regulatory deep cleaning in the **Regulatory Deep Cleaning Action Plan**, my services have continued to follow-up on the following **simplification initiatives and the Stress-testing plan for 2026**:

In the area of **internal security**, my services looked at where simplification efforts and reducing administrative burden can best enhance the security of citizens in the context of implementing the European Internal Security Strategy, **ProtectEU**.

- We proposed in June 2026 an ambitious **overhaul of Europol's mandate**. The proposal contributes to simplification by reducing administrative burden for Europol and for national authorities, with clearer procedures and proportionate safeguards, in particular in the field of Data Subject Categorisation. Technical guidance, training and centralised support provided by Europol are expected to further facilitate implementation. The ultimate beneficiaries are EU citizens, who will directly and indirectly benefit from lower crime rates, reduced economic damages, and less crime and security related costs. Although the societal benefits of fighting and preventing crime are inherently difficult to estimate, the benefits for society at large in terms of a reduction in crime have been estimated at approximately EUR 1 000 million over 10 years. The benefits in terms of savings in administrative costs have been estimated at approximately EUR 200 million over 10 years.
- The **evaluation of the [Terrorist Content Online Regulation](#)** confirmed that the Regulation is effective overall in addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online and that the practical benefits of prevention of terrorist content creation and dissemination that the implementation of the Regulation has brought outweigh its costs. These benefits are difficult to measure, as they result from the absence of potentially very harmful criminal activity.
- In February 2026, the College adopted a proposal for [new rules to combat the trafficking of illicit firearms](#), which completes the EU legal framework for firearms and ensures harmonised and effective criminalisation of firearms trafficking. The costs incurred by the harmonisation of offences are offset by more effective investigations and prosecutions and reinforce law enforcement's ability to respond to emerging threats. The proposal does not entail costs for businesses and citizens, and it will help protect them from the dangers posed by illicit firearms.
- We also carried out a successful **reality check** as part of the [Firearms Directive](#) evaluation on 24-25 June 2026, to assess the performance of its provisions, as they affect businesses' competitiveness. We collected stakeholders' experiences and real-world contexts to identify obstacles related to the implementation of the

Directive, good practices, and opportunities to reduce administrative burden and promote simplification. I paid particular attention to the discussion on the European Firearms Pass, which has a high simplification potential.

- In December 2025, the Commission adopted a **new EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan** improving coordination by better data collection, monitoring, early warning, and rapid response measures. Compliance and enforcement costs will be offset by an increased capacity to address drug trafficking and enhanced cross-border operations.
- We had previously also stress-tested our drug legislation and policy, in particular the [Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA](#) laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of **criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking** and conducted a **reality check** on 29 October 2025 on the evaluation of the Framework Decision. It focused on technical feedback from practitioners and experts in the field of organised crime, mostly prosecutors, underlining the efficiency and implementation of the Framework Decision, its coherence with other initiatives to counter illicit drug trafficking and possible obstacles to cross-border cooperation.
- We are also reviewing the effectiveness of the [Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors](#).

DG HOME also promoted **digitalisation**, capability development and **strategic autonomy** in internal security, border management, and migration management by investing in and showcasing state-of-the-art European technologies. We continued to gather the Community for [European Research and Innovation for Security \(CERIS\)](#), and supported innovative projects, such as the [GEMS project](#) that addresses extremist recruitment in online gaming environments through an AI-supported monitoring tool. We carried out a **reality check** on 21 November 2025, as a follow-up to my 2025 implementation dialogue on challenges to the EU's **security industry competitiveness**. It focused on the obstacles and challenges that the EU civil security industry sector is facing, mainly with regards to competitiveness and market uptake of innovation. Furthermore, the [Europol proposal](#) supports the EU's policies on innovation, research and competitiveness, including under Horizon Europe and the European Innovation Agenda, ultimately aiming to create a more efficient EU approach to research and development.

Digitalisation is also a focus of the first **European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy**, aiming to provide Member States with modern, more secure and efficient tools to improve the quality, consistency and timeliness of decision-making in **asylum and migration management**. The **list of safe countries of origin** further reduces the burden on national authorities by setting out common rules, and faster and more effective procedures. With the **safe third country concept**, we have also delivered a key building block for a functioning, credible asylum system. National authorities are now able to reject manifestly unfounded asylum applications quickly and efficiently and can speed up asylum procedures.

Regarding the **management of EU external borders**, major efforts to simplify and digitalise procedures and significantly reduce administrative burden continue to be underway with the rollout of "Smart Borders", one of the most advanced [IT infrastructure](#) systems in the world, comprised namely of the upgraded **Schengen Information System** and **Visa Information System**, the **Entry/Exit System (EES)**, the **European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)**, and the **European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS)** of third country nationals. This is complemented by the ongoing preparations to launch the digitalisation of visa procedures and by the ongoing work on developing the centralised mechanism (eu-LISA's API/PNR router) to receive advance passenger information (API) to **facilitate border management** in relation to passengers of flights from third countries into the Union.

In the area of **migration policy**, simplification was built into the Regulation for a [New Common European System for Returns](#), to be formally adopted in autumn 2026. The Regulation will ensure **unity and coherence** in processing and issuing return decisions across the Member States. Voluntary mutual recognition will be supported by the mandatory use of the **European Return Order**. We will further work to modernise our legal framework and **digitalise the management of return**, readmission and reintegration cases. These **simplification measures** have the potential to streamline procedures, **reduce administrative burden** associated with today's multitude of return decisions issued by individual Member States and the lack of sufficient digitalisation, and **alleviate pressure on national return systems**.

The [implementation report on the Employers Sanctions Directive](#) showed that overall, progress has been made in implementing the Directive since the last report in 2021. However, discrepancies remain in how the legislation is applied across the 25 Member States. The [implementation report on the Seasonal Workers Directive](#) demonstrated that the Directive and its implementation have led to more streamlined labour mobility pathways, helping to reduce incentives for illegal employment and undeclared work, but practical implementation gaps remained.

At my request, my services have also **mapped existing empowerments** to adopt implementing and delegated acts and assessed their potential for simplification. We have identified **three acts** planned for adoption in 2026 to be deprioritised, while **57 acts** planned or envisaged for 2026 are currently considered as being either legally **required** or **indispensable** to achieve important policy objectives. For the prioritisation, we have focused on acts that are legally required and on acts that are necessary for the achievement of EU policy objectives, notably those needed to implement legislation, to simplify it and provide benefits for citizens, businesses and administrations. A large majority of prioritised acts are implementing **digitalisation and interoperability** of large border IT systems. They bring, in themselves, simplification for national administrations as they introduce common rules, common requirements or common templates.

B. Implementation

Implementation support and steering

Under my steer, my services supported and steered Member States in preparing for the successful **implementation of the [Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)**, which is one of the key priorities of our mandate. As of 12 June 2026, the new rules entered into application. Important progress has been achieved. Several Member States have taken significant steps to reduce backlogs and delays in asylum procedures through increased capacity, targeted training, improved legal counselling, and closer alignment with judicial systems. In parallel, progress was made in strengthening the capacity needed to carry out responsibility transfers and implement solidarity commitments effectively.

This overall progress was supported by a **dedicated implementation structure** composed of 27 country teams, each led by a senior manager, under the coordination of the Pact Steering Committee and with the involvement of relevant Commission services and EU Agencies. A corresponding structure has been established in each Member State, usually led by a senior national counterpart coordinating interministerial efforts. Throughout the process, I maintained a **continuous dialogue with Member States** to address national challenges and identify solutions. This approach can serve as a model for how the Commission supports Member States in putting in place a complex set of interlinked legislative proposals from the very beginning. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) has, in addition, developed a range of products to support and steer Member States on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. These include practical Guides and Tools, training Modules and various information materials strengthening the right to information of applicants.

My services assisted Member States in accessing funding, making sure that the relevant **additional EU funding** stemming from the mid-term review of Home Affairs Funds helps Member States effectively implement in the Pact. In 2025, the 2021-2027 Home Affairs programmes (the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) reached full operational pace, with most national allocations already committed to projects in key priority areas.

To safeguard the security of the EU's **external borders** and maintain a well-functioning and resilient Schengen Area, DG HOME has worked closely with Member States and eu-LISA to achieve progress in the deployment of the EU's interoperable border IT systems, in particular the Entry/Exit System (EES), the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), and the revised Visa Information System (VIS). These systems provide **vital tools for robust border control**. In particular, the EU's **new Entry/Exit System (EES)** which became **operational** on 10 April 2026, **replaces passport stamping with digitally recorded entries**, exits or refusals of entry of non-EU nationals coming for short stays. By eliminating manual inputs, **digitalisation will lead to higher efficiency**, support accessibility, ultimately benefiting security, the EU economy and European citizens.

We have been actively supporting the implementation of various directives and regulations in the **area of internal security**. I hosted the **EU Internet Forum Ministerial** meeting on 4 March 2026 to discuss emerging threats and

exploitation of online service providers for terrorist and criminal purposes with industry and Member States to complement implementation of EU digital legislation by necessary voluntary action.

To support the implementation of the [Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities](#), I presented to the College for adoption in September 2025 [non-binding guidelines](#) to support Member States in the identification of critical entities and presented another set of [non-binding guidelines](#) in July 2026 to further specify the technical, security and organisational measures that may be taken by critical entities.

To facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of best practices among Member States and to promote effective **transposition and implementation of the information exchange acquis**, the Commission has engaged extensively with Member States also in the internal security area through bilateral meetings, implementation conferences, expert workshops and technical coordination meetings. This concerns notably the [Directive on information exchange between law enforcement authorities](#), the [Prüm II Regulation](#), [Regulation \(EU\) 2025/12](#) and [Regulation \(EU\) 2025/13](#) on **Advance Passenger Information (API)** and the [Passenger Name Records \(PNR\) Directive](#). This work was complemented by close cooperation with Europol, eu-LISA and other relevant agencies to provide legal, policy and technical guidance, facilitate the development of the necessary operational and IT capabilities, identify and address implementation challenges, and promote coherent and effective implementation across the Union.

Implementation dialogues

My [implementation dialogue on Talent Attraction and Retention](#) took place on 11 December 2025. The dialogue focused on supporting the EU's attractiveness for talented third country nationals. Stakeholders outlined challenges related to lengthy and complex procedures, fragmented implementation of EU directives, the risk of unfair recruitment practices and inadequate working conditions, limited integration prospects for family members, and a negative narrative around migration. Talent attraction and retention are essential for the EU's overall competitiveness, especially in key sectors where there is a significant demand for skilled professionals.

Participants shared best practices including creating one-stop shops for newcomers, facilitating job matching for talented individuals from third countries, running information campaigns in third countries, establishing cooperation and mobility agreements with non-EU countries, and using digital matching tools to connect workers with employers. They indicated several actions for follow-up, including faster immigration and visa procedures, notably for specific categories in priority sectors; enhanced pre- and post departure measures, to support integration processes, and improved protection of migrant workers as well as enhanced coordination at EU, national and local levels. The summary conclusions of this implementation dialogue were published on a dedicated [website](#).

My [implementation dialogue](#) on the **Implementation of the mandates of Home Affairs Agencies** took place on 19 June 2026. I consulted the Agencies within my remit (CEPOL, EUAA, eu-LISA, Frontex, Europol, EUDA) to identify obstacles to implementation, discuss how to improve cooperation and operational efficiency, reduce compliance burdens in their everyday work, and strengthen implementation of the Agencies' mandates.

The Agencies highlighted a combination of **operational, legal and governance-related challenges** affecting implementation of their mandates. Agencies also underlined the importance of **earlier and closer involvement in legislative developments** as well as the need for sufficient flexibility in implementing provisions and agency frameworks.

The Agencies provided **best practice cases** of existing tools and mechanisms that support coordination, knowledge-sharing and joint delivery. The role of Member States in ensuring successful implementation and operational cooperation was emphasised. As regards simplification opportunities and solutions, the Agencies raised the need to reduce unnecessary administrative burden by centralising IT tools and streamline reporting, communication and compliance processes.

A number of suggestions for simplification are already reflected in the recent Europol proposal and will also be reflected in the forthcoming proposal to revise the Frontex mandate. My services will follow up to simplify lengthy and complex procedures and to improve knowledge-sharing and streamline multi-agency cooperation further. The

issues raised will inform work on the future legal and governance frameworks of the Agencies, with continued attention to and simplification opportunities¹.

C. Enforcement

While my services focused on supporting Member States in correctly transposing and applying EU law, formal **enforcement work** also continued and included a significant number of **infringement** procedures for incomplete or incorrect transposition of directives and incorrect implementation of regulations across **the security, migration and border policy** areas. In the reporting period, my services initiated 80 new infringement cases, advanced 19 cases by sending a Reasoned Opinion to the Member States concerned, referred 7 cases to the Court of Justice, and closed 36 cases where full and correct implementation of the EU *acquis* was achieved.

The key infringement cases during the reporting period were the following:

In **the field of security**, the Commission continued its horizontal exercise to ensure the full transposition of the EU's [firearms acquis](#), by opening 13 infringement cases² for incorrect transposition of the [Firearms Directive](#) and its two implementing directives on the [marking of firearms](#) and on the technical specifications for [alarm and signal weapons](#). The Commission opened five infringement cases³ for lack of transposition of implementing directive on the [minimum depth of markings on firearms](#), out of which four have already been successfully closed. To prevent terrorists and criminals from manufacturing homemade explosives, the Commission pursued two cases⁴ for failure to comply with the [Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors](#). The Commission also decided to open 10 infringement cases for failure to correctly transpose provisions of the Directive on [combating money laundering by criminal law](#). This directive defines criminal offences and sanctions against natural and legal persons in relation to money laundering, with the aim of facilitating police and judicial cooperation between EU Member States. To protect children, we advanced cases against seven Member States⁵ by sending reasoned opinions for the incorrect transposition of the [Child Sexual Abuse Directive](#), closing two of them since then⁶. Enforcement work further led to advancing⁷ and closure⁸ of several infringement cases regarding the incorrect transposition of Directive on [attacks against information systems](#).

The Commission referred six Member States⁹ to Court with financial sanctions for failure to transpose any measures of the [Critical Entities Resilience Directive](#) on time. This directive is part of a broader effort to strengthen the EU's ability to withstand systemic disruptions and ensure the continuity of essential services, covering natural and man-made risks such as terrorist attacks, cyber threats, criminal infiltration and sabotage. Therefore, swift transposition of the directive is essential to reach this important common objective. In addition to the Court referrals, two Member States received reasoned opinions due to partial transposition of this directive.¹⁰ We also proposed eight reasoned opinions¹¹ for the incomplete transposition of the directive on the [exchange of information between the Member States' law enforcement authorities](#). The Commission also launched infringement cases against eight Member States¹² for not transposing the [Alignment Directive](#) on information exchanges related to terrorist offences with EU

¹ [Implementation Dialogue on the Implementation of the mandates of Home Affairs Agencies – Migration and Home Affairs](#)

² [BG, DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, CY, LV, LT, PT, RO, SI](#)

³ [CZ, BG, FI, PL, PT](#)

⁴ [PL, BG](#)

⁵ [ES, BG, IE, MT, HR, EL, SI](#)

⁶ [BG, ES](#)

⁷ [EE, HU, PL](#)

⁸ [EE, HU, LU](#)

⁹ [BG, ES, FR, NL, PL, SE](#)

¹⁰ [BE, LV](#)

¹¹ [BE, BG, DE, EE, ES, FR, PL, PT](#)

¹² [BG, EE, EL, ES, CY, NL, PT, SI](#)

data protection rules, out of which five have already successfully notified their transposition measures in the meantime, leading to closure of the cases.¹³

In the field of **migration and asylum**, enforcement work continued on the incomplete transposition of [Blue Card Directive](#), where my services successfully worked with the Member States concerned to ensure complete transposition and subsequently were able to close six infringement cases¹⁴. Six further cases¹⁵ regarding the non-conform transposition of the [Seasonal Workers Directive](#) could also be closed following full and correct transposition by the Member States concerned. The Commission also opened 16 new cases¹⁶ for non-communication of full transposition of the [Receptions Conditions Directive](#) and 17 new cases¹⁷ for non-communication of full transposition of the [Single Permit Directive](#). In addition to this, the Commission launched a second infringement procedure against [Hungary](#)¹⁸ for failing to fulfil its obligations under the [Facilitators' Package](#) to impose effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for the offence of facilitating unauthorised entry, transit and residence into the EU (i.e. migrant smuggling), and also to implement the [rules on criminal penalties](#) regarding these offences. The Commission has also been periodically applying the offsetting procedure for the financial penalties due by Hungary following the Court case [C-123/22](#), in which Hungary was ordered to pay a periodic penalty payment of EUR 1 million per day for not complying with the previous judgement in case [C-808/18](#) concerning violation of several provisions of the [Asylum Procedures Directive](#) and the [Return Directive](#). In parallel,

My services paid increased attention to possible instances of gold-plating, namely where Member States introduce national requirements that go beyond what is required under Union law, and other regulatory divergences that may affect the consistent and proportionate application of Union law across Member States. **The implementation dialogue on Talent Attraction and Retention** explicitly identified key barriers such as the fragmented systems on recognition of qualifications, which create additional burdens on individuals and businesses.

In the field of **border control**, my services continued monitoring the application of the Schengen acquis and successfully supported Member States in the correct application of the rules introducing a [digital seal on the uniform format for visas](#)¹⁹ and [new format for residence permits](#) for third country nationals²⁰, which allowed closure of the associated infringement cases.

As part of the strengthened monitoring obligations under the [revised Schengen Borders Code](#), the Commission, on 2 June 2026, adopted **nine opinions** on the necessity and proportionality of the **reintroduction of internal border control** by the Member States²¹ for a duration of 12 months²². In its opinions, the Commission emphasises the need for such reintroductions to remain a temporary measure of last resort and calls upon the Member States to work towards the lifting of control at the internal border, replacing them with alternative measures such as enhanced police cooperation and information exchange, and presenting mitigating measures.²³

My services have received **10 petitions** during the reporting period related to alleged breaches of EU law. However, none of these petitions have so far resulted in the opening of an infringement case. Currently, one ongoing petition²⁴

¹³ [BG, CY, ES, NL, SI](#)

¹⁴ [BG, HR, PL, SI, SK, SE](#)

¹⁵ [DE, EE, EL, HR, LT, SE](#)

¹⁶ [AT, BE, BG, DE, ES, FR, HU, IE, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI](#)

¹⁷ [AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, FI, FR, HU, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI](#)

¹⁸ Case [C-521/25](#) of 31 July 2025, European Commission v Hungary, is still pending

¹⁹ [BG, EL](#)

²⁰ [BG, PT](#)

²¹ AT, DE, DK, FR, IT, NL, NO, SI, SE

²² Based on Article 27a(3) of the Schengen Borders Code

²³ [Commission opinions on temporary internal border controls in Schengen Area - Migration and Home Affairs](#)

²⁴ Petition No 0620/2016 by V.S. (Czech) regarding access to asylum and the reception conditions for migrants and refugees in Greece

is linked to an infringement case²⁵. Moreover, my services continuously handle complaints submitted by citizens and organisations concerning the implementation by Member States of the EU legislation in the area of home affairs.

4. Way forward

I have instructed my services to continue to **stress-test existing legislation**. We envisage following up to the assessment announced in the **EU Visa Strategy** on the **feasibility of an ‘Omnibus’** proposal of targeted amendments to existing EU rules on students and researchers and highly qualified and skilled workers to adapt them to the innovation and research ecosystems, as well as possible follow-up actions for start-up/scale-up/innovative entrepreneurs.

For our **external borders**, the Schengen legal bases ([Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement](#) and [Council Decision on the definition of the Schengen acquis](#)) will be analysed to assess whether the complex landscape of the Schengen acquis and its variable geometry can be simplified. This is particularly important in the light of numerous challenges that the Schengen area has faced in the recent years. Annual reporting on the State of Schengen and Schengen Barometer also examines how to pursue the priorities of each Schengen cycle more efficiently and ensure the effective delivery of the objectives and targets set out in the Schengen Strategy.

Concerning **migration**, and in line with the applicable rules, by the end of 2026, to ensure a fair and firm approach, the mandate of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) will be assessed in the framework of an independent external evaluation ([Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum](#))²⁶, along with the European Migration Network ([Council Decision on European Migration Network](#)). The evaluation of the Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum will consider to what extent the Regulation has contributed to the simplification and cost reduction in the Agency and identify further opportunities in this regard. Finally, the evaluation of the [Employers Sanctions Directive](#) will enable an in-depth, evidence-based assessment to determine whether the Directive remains fit for purpose and what lessons can be learned to improve its effectiveness. This includes the question of whether it may be necessary to review or clarify the existing rules to overcome specific legal, policy and implementation gaps. Finally, the review scheduled for 2027 of the [Asylum and Migration Management Regulation](#) and the [Asylum Procedure Regulation](#) will be an opportunity for a first evaluation of how the new rules are working in practice and whether further adjustments are needed. I also intend to consult stakeholders on the topic of **AI in migration**, with the date still to be determined. In the longer term, EU-funded research and innovation activities on migration, under Horizon Europe, will continue to support policy design and policy implementation.

In addition to the reality check carried out in June 2026 on the [Firearms Directive](#), my services will also carry out another one in the second half of 2026 to verify whether the [Employers Sanctions Directive](#) is still fit for purpose.

In the area of **internal security**, my services will carry out four **evaluations**, with the objective to identify further scope for simplification of EU legislation in that area. The evaluation of the Regulation on **dissemination of terrorist content online**, which was announced in the **ProtectEU Strategy**, will assess the potential for simplification, especially in relation to its implementation by the Hosting Service Providers. The evaluation of the [Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors](#) will analyse possible simplification of certain obligations related to the trade and use of explosives precursors, while taking into account the security risks related to the manufacture and use of home-made explosives. The evaluation of the [Firearms Directive](#) will examine practical obstacles and good practices related to the implementation of the Directive, with a view to facilitating intra-EU trade and travel, reducing administrative burden and simplifying rules, while maintaining the balance with internal security requirements regarding the acquisition, possession, and trade of firearms within the EU. The evaluation of the [Directive on the use of passenger name records \(PNR\)](#) will look into potential harmonisation of certain rules on PNR processing in case current rules are transposed and implemented in an inconsistent manner at

²⁵ [Petition No 0620/2016 by V.S. \(Czech\) regarding access to asylum and the reception conditions for migrants and refugees in Greece](#)

²⁶ As provided for by Art. 70 of Regulation ([EU](#) 2021/2303) on the EUAA

national level. It will also assess whether and how to address the current challenges experienced by airlines in relation to the transfers of PNR data to third countries, with a view to simplifying air carriers' business operations. I also envisage to consult stakeholders on the issue **of critical entities** in my **fourth implementation dialogue**, to be held in November 2026.

As regards **enforcement work**, my services will continue to monitor the timely and correct implementation of the **Pact**. We will also check the completeness of the upcoming legislation, such as the **Directives** on [receptions conditions](#), [trafficking in human beings](#) and [asset recovery and confiscation](#), and advance cases related to incomplete transposition of directives on [critical entities](#), [single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work](#), the [exchange of information between the Member States' law enforcement authorities](#) and [Blue Card](#). As several cases on [critical entities](#) have already been referred to Court²⁷ for late transposition, with a request for financial penalties, follow-up to them will remain a priority. Enforcement work will also advance on ongoing cases where the transposition into national legislation is not done in a correct manner, specifically regarding directives on [firearms](#), [child sexual abuse](#), the [seasonal workers](#), [combating money laundering by criminal law](#) and the Directive on [combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment](#) will be proposed.

²⁷ [BG, ES, FR, NL, PL, SE](#)

Annex: examples

- **“Smart Borders”** – the putting in place of an **advanced border management system** enhances security, streamlines travel, and facilitates trade. This is composed of the Entry/Exit System (EES) in operation since April 2026, the forthcoming launch of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) as well as the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), complemented by preparations to launch the digitalisation of visa procedures and the ongoing work on developing the centralised mechanism (eu-LISA’s API/PNR router). These efforts **streamline border management** by **replacing manual, paper-based processes with automated, digital and interoperable tools**. Together, they **simplify travellers’ processing**, enable early risk screening and **improve information-sharing** across Member States. This leads to faster, more consistent decision-making, while **reducing administrative burdens**, duplication and operational costs. Ultimately, these systems create a **more efficient, secure and cost-effective approach** to managing Europe’s external borders.
- The first ever **EU Visa Policy Strategy adopted in January 2026** is a major milestone for the EU setting a strategic vision for how we can use our visa policy to advance European interests. It results in more security for citizens, **more growth for businesses**, and deeper global partnerships. At the same time, the Strategy also **makes legitimate travel easier, faster and more predictable**. The **digitalisation of visa procedures**, which will be rolled out in the coming years, will further support this, also helping reward travellers with excellent travel history through the issuing of multi-entry visas for periods longer than five years. This will boost business travel and opportunities, through accelerated visa processing thanks to a list of trusted companies. Good visa policy is also the first step to better legal migration, as attractive global talent will benefit from a simple and predictable visa process. The Commission thus accompanied its Strategy with a recommendation on attracting talent for innovation.
- The European Commission mobilised **3 billion for 2025–2027 under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Border Management and Visa Instrument**, equally split between the two funds, to support Member States in preparing for the full implementation of the Pact on Asylum and Migration and, under AMIF, in responding to the needs linked to persons fleeing Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The additional funding had two sources: a revision of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (EUR 1.8 billion) and a top-up to the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and Border Management and Visa Instrument (EUR 1.2 billion).