

Europe Is Trying to Patch Migration With Duct Tape

—
SHORT-TERM FIXES
FOR A LONG-TERM
SYSTEMIC CHALLENGE

BORDERS
PEOPLE
POLICY
FRICTION
SHORT-TERMISM
A MORE
COHERENT EUROPE

—
Mateusz Chrzanowski
SYSTEM OF SYSTEMS ARCHITECT



In recent weeks, Europe has once again shown that it does not have a migration architecture. It has a new Migration and Asylum Pact, return debates, border pressure, political theatre, emergency mechanisms and a growing belief that stricter procedures will somehow become a functioning system. But even as the new pact entered application, reports pointed to operational problems, including technical issues with Eurodac and the wider fact that member states were still not fully prepared for implementation. At the same time, Europe's return system remains structurally weak, with the Commission itself pointing to a return rate of only 28% in 2025.

Then the European Parliament approved new return rules by 418 votes to 218. The rules are meant to strengthen deportations and allow the creation of return hubs outside the EU. After the vote, some right-wing MEPs chanted "send them back."

Europe should be ashamed of that.

Not because returns are unnecessary. They are necessary. Not because deportations should not exist. They must exist if a migration system is to have any credibility. But because a continent with Europe's history should know where political dehumanisation leads. Migration requires firmness, enforcement and consequences. It does not require primitive chants inside democratic institutions.

That scene matters because it shows the real failure. Europe is not discussing migration as a system. It is discussing migration as a political object. The current approach to migration is like patching a hole in the hull of a ship with silver duct tape. Technically, you can try. But the effectiveness is at least questionable.

The Migration Pact, return hubs, faster procedures, stricter rules and border mechanisms may become fragments of a larger system. But they are not, by themselves, an architecture. They are patches. And patches do not solve a process that begins long before a person reaches the European border.

That is not a system. That is a collection of patches.

The Migration Pact, return hubs, faster procedures and border mechanisms may become fragments of a larger system. By themselves, they are patches.

Migration does not start at the border. It starts where people lose safety, work, dignity, stability or any credible future. People do not pay smugglers enormous sums of money because they simply feel like crossing a border. In many cases they hand over the savings of a lifetime because they are escaping war, poverty, hunger, regimes, violence, instability or the collapse of any realistic path forward.

Smugglers are not the source of migration. They are the criminal layer that grows where legal architecture is missing. They exploit desperation. They earn disproportionate money from it. They risk mainly the lives of the people who pay them. This layer will never disappear completely, because there will always be people willing to profit from human weakness and fear. But its function can be reduced. The way to do that is not only to strengthen the border. It is to create controlled legal channels before people enter the smuggling economy.

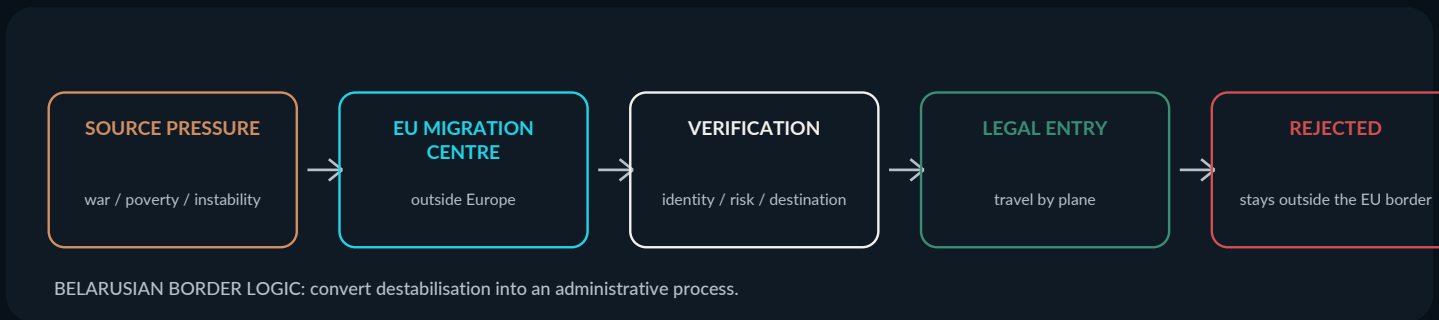
That means Europe should build international EU migration centres outside Europe, in regions of high migration pressure and along major migration corridors. In some cases, cooperation with Norway and the United Kingdom would be logical. In some regions, cooperation with the United States could also be considered. But the core structure should be European.

Take Afghanistan as an example. Instead of waiting until people reach the Polish-Belarusian border, the Mediterranean route or another external EU frontier, Europe should have migration offices in neighboring regions, such as Pakistan or other countries where such agreements are possible. A person could apply there, go through verification, receive training, be assigned a destination country and then travel to Europe legally by plane.

That would immediately change several layers of the system. It would reduce the power of smugglers. It would give Europe more control over who arrives. It would allow people to keep at least part of their money instead of handing everything to criminal networks. It would allow early verification. It would make migration more transparent, more controlled and more useful for the receiving countries.

This same logic applies to the Polish-Belarusian border. A European migration centre should exist there as well. Not to give satisfaction to the Russian and Belarusian regimes that use people as tools of destabilization, but to remove their leverage. If people appear at that border, their asylum applications could be accepted and processed by a European structure. If the case is valid, the person does not automatically become Poland's responsibility. They can be assigned to Poland, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Czechia or another member state according to capacity and need. If the application is rejected, the person stays on the other side of the border.

This would transform a destabilization tool into an administrative process.



Europe also needs a central European Migration Authority. Not another symbolic agency. A real executive structure with operational capacity. It should verify asylum claims, classify cases, coordinate relocation, manage external migration centres, organise returns, cooperate with third countries and supervise integration inside member states.

This structure is needed not only for future migration. It is also needed for the migration Europe already has.

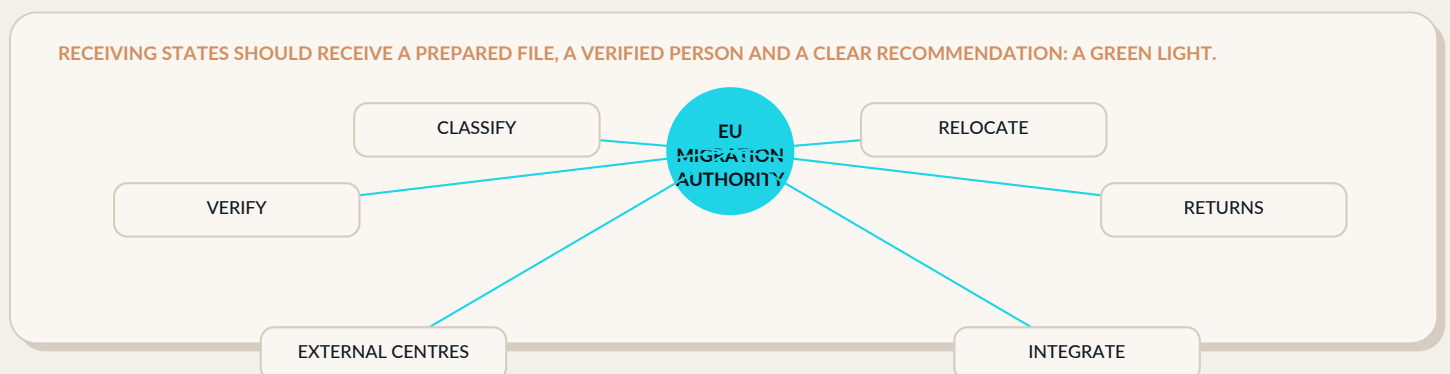
Europe already has people inside its territory whose status is unclear, delayed, contested, rejected, pending or functionally suspended. This existing layer cannot be ignored. A serious European Migration Authority should pull these people into a structured process, verify them properly and classify them clearly. Some should receive protection. Some should receive residence pathways. Some should be relocated to countries that need workers and have capacity. Some should be removed.

This cannot be handled by endless national queues and fragmented bureaucracies. The international authority should prepare the full file: identity verification, security checks, asylum assessment, professional background, language profile, family status, health and vulnerability information, integration requirements and recommended destination. Then, in cooperation with member states, it should match verified people with actual capacity, labour demand, housing availability and social infrastructure.

The final asylum or residence decision would still be accepted by the receiving state. But the receiving state should not receive a chaotic case. It should receive a prepared file, a verified person and a clear recommendation. In other words: a green light.

If there is no green light, there should be no relocation. If a person fails verification, the system should not waste time pretending that the next administrative layer will magically solve the problem. That person should be moved into the removal process.

This is one of the missing layers in Europe today. Europe needs an accelerated, large-scale international migration office capable of resolving the accumulated backlog, not only managing the next wave. Future procedures must be built architecturally, from source to integration or removal. But the problem that already exists must also be processed.



Migration is too important to be left as a fragmented conflict between national systems. In this area, member states should not be able to paralyze the entire continent because they do not want to take part in a coordinated structure. This is not a minor policy area. It affects security, demography, labour markets, border stability, social cohesion and Europe's long-term ability to function.

The Ukrainian case shows this clearly. Ukrainians have largely settled in Poland. They are generally hardworking people and beneficial to the economy. The issue is not that they are in Europe. The issue is that the burden is distributed unevenly. Poland can absorb a lot, and its demographic needs will grow as the population ages, but that does not mean every movement should concentrate in one country.

There should be a simple European procedure allowing Ukrainians and other accepted migrants to relocate from Poland to Spain, Italy, Germany, France or other countries where there is capacity and labour demand. Not after years of applications. Not through unnecessary bureaucratic friction. Through a coordinated European migration mechanism.

Europe is ageing. It needs people. But it needs people guided through a system, not delivered by chaos.

FROM POLAND



Accepted migrants should be relocatable through a coordinated European mechanism, not trapped in bureaucratic friction.

Verification must be real. A person's history should be checked as close to the source as possible: school, work, family background, criminal record, reasons for migration, security risks and local context. European databases, Europol and Interpol are necessary, but they are not enough. Migration centers should cooperate with diplomats, consulates, regional experts, local institutions and people who understand the language and culture of the applicants.

And when a decision is negative, it must mean something.

If an application for residence or asylum is rejected, the verification is negative. In most cases, the person either does not meet the conditions for protection or has been assessed as a threat to public order, security or the integrity of the migration system. Failing to enforce removal decisions leads to an increase in crime. A state cannot reject a person's right to stay, deny them legal work and legal status, and then leave them inside the country for years. That creates exactly the environment in which informal and criminal structures grow.

A removal decision without removal is not migration policy. It is administrative fiction.

Returns must be efficient. If the country of origin cooperates, the person is returned through standard procedure. If it does not cooperate, Europe needs other executable mechanisms, including transport to the border of the country of which the person is a citizen, in cooperation with the local authorities of the neighboring country. Such a person is escorted to the border of their country of origin under the supervision of the neighboring country's border authorities, and their only option is to cross the border and return to their country. Returnees may be transported on passenger aircraft under the supervision of European authorities.. The point is simple: a person whose application has been finally rejected cannot remain indefinitely inside Europe because the system is afraid to execute its own decision.

Human rights cannot mean the permanent impossibility of enforcing a lawful negative decision.

If the person originally came through an EU migration centre outside Europe, and then, once in Europe, a decision was made to send that person back for various reasons. the matter is much easier that way . They can be returned to that centre. Around such centres, basic modular settlements can exist for people who lost the right to enter or remain in Europe. They would not receive a European-style benefits package. They would not freely move through the host country without permission. Their realistic paths would be limited: obtain status in the host country, if possible, or return to their country of origin.

This is not cruelty. This is system logic.



"A removal decision without removal is not migration policy. It is administrative fiction."

The other side of the system is integration. Accepting a migrant is not the end of the process. It is the beginning of another one. Every accepted migrant should go through serious integration training. Not a symbolic presentation. A real programme lasting weeks if needed. Law, language, public behaviour, schools, work, administration, gender relations, consent, domestic violence, sexual violence, dress codes, social norms and criminal responsibility.

This must be taught by people who understand the migrant's language, culture, religion and mental models. A European official reading a rulebook is not enough. If someone comes from a culture where women, clothing, consent, sexuality or family authority are understood differently, the system must explain the rules directly and clearly.

A short skirt is not consent. A woman's body is not available because of how she dresses. Domestic violence is a crime. Rape is a crime. Refusal means refusal. These principles are not optional.

If someone refuses such training or refuses to accept the basic rules of the receiving society, that person should be removed from the process.

Integration also cannot mean placing migrants in one block, one district or one social housing cluster. That creates parallel societies. Migrants should be distributed across cities and regions in a controlled way, living among local communities rather than inside migrant ghettos.

LAW

LANGUAGE

PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR

WORK & SCHOOL

CONSENT & VIOLENCE

There should be local introduction mechanisms. If several migrant families, or several migrants are placed in a neighborhood, organize a meeting. Let them introduce themselves. "My name is Amir. I came from this country. I studied this. I worked in this profession. I came because my country became unsafe. I completed the training. I understand your rules. I want to live in your community."

That changes perception. Local people no longer see an anonymous mass. They see specific people. Migrants no longer enter a hostile unknown environment. They are introduced into a community.

This also changes how crime is perceived. Today, when a migrant commits a serious crime, parts of the migrant community may interpret enforcement as an attack: "they arrested one of us, they do not want us here." But if the rules were explained clearly, if integration was real, if the person had entered a community through a structured process, the perception is different: he knew the rules, he broke them, he faces consequences.

That is security architecture.

There must also be field officers responsible for integration. Their role should be to visit migrants, check living conditions, help with language, work, school, documents and local conflicts. This is not a soft social add-on. It is an operational layer of stability.

LOCAL INTRODUCTION MECHANISM

"My name is Amir. I came from this country. I studied this. I worked in this profession. I came because my country became unsafe. I completed the training. I understand your rules. I want to live in your community."

This is not a soft social add-on. It is security architecture.

Work is another core layer. If someone had a profession in their country of origin, the system should help them enter a similar function in the receiving country. Migrants need to earn money, support families, build a future and become productive. If Europe needs people, it should not waste them through administrative neglect.

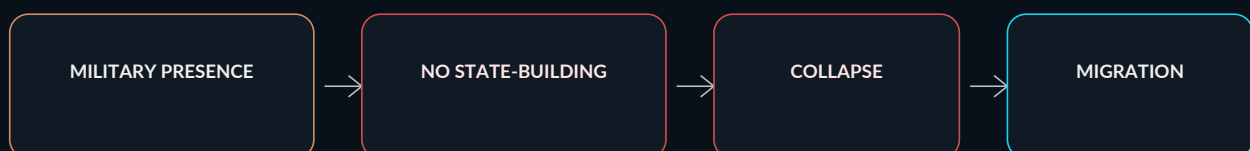
But Europe must also look at why migration is produced.

Afghanistan is one of the clearest examples of systemic failure. Twenty years of international presence, enormous spending, and almost immediately after the American withdrawal the regime returned. That is difficult to even comment on. What exactly were those billions spent on? Why was so much invested in military presence and protection, and not in building a country that could survive?

Where were the new cities, factories, jobs, local institutions, political structures, independent army, education systems and economic engines that would make the new order real for ordinary citizens?

A peacekeeping mission without state-building is only an expensive pause before the next collapse.

The same structural issue appears across Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and other destabilized regions. The West often participates in destabilization directly or indirectly, and then treats migration as if it were only an external border problem. It is not. In many cases, we produce migration and then refuse to build the architecture needed to manage the people displaced by the consequences.



Africa is another layer. Charity will not stabilise Africa. It may help individuals. It may save lives in specific moments. But it will not build states, cities, jobs, infrastructure or economic gravity.

If Europe and global corporations want to reduce migration pressure, they need to invest in the places people are leaving from. Not as charity. As infrastructure and business.

This is where my concept of H.S.F. Horizon Stabilization Fund fits. The idea is to create a long-term international investment vehicle funded by the world's largest corporations, with an annual budget of roughly €50–80 billion. The fund would not be a donation programme. It would be a profitable long-term business model.

It would build planned cities, energy systems, water infrastructure, factories, logistics hubs, airports, schools, clinics, offices and housing in high-pressure migration regions. It would create economic gravity where people currently see no future.

The fund would own assets: airports, factories, logistics infrastructure, commercial buildings and industrial zones. Companies would rent or operate them. Local people would receive work. Housing would be provided on very favourable terms, possibly through long-term repayment at construction cost or with strong subsidies. That is crucial. Without that layer, such a model could be attacked as neocolonialism. Local people must materially benefit from the value created.

During construction, local companies should be formed and trained. Engineers can come from outside, but local people must participate in building the cities in which they will later live. They must earn, learn and acquire operational competence.

H.S.F. = INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUSINESS, NOT CHARITY

- planned cities
- energy systems
- water infrastructure

- factories
- logistics hubs
- airports

- schools
- clinics
- offices
- housing

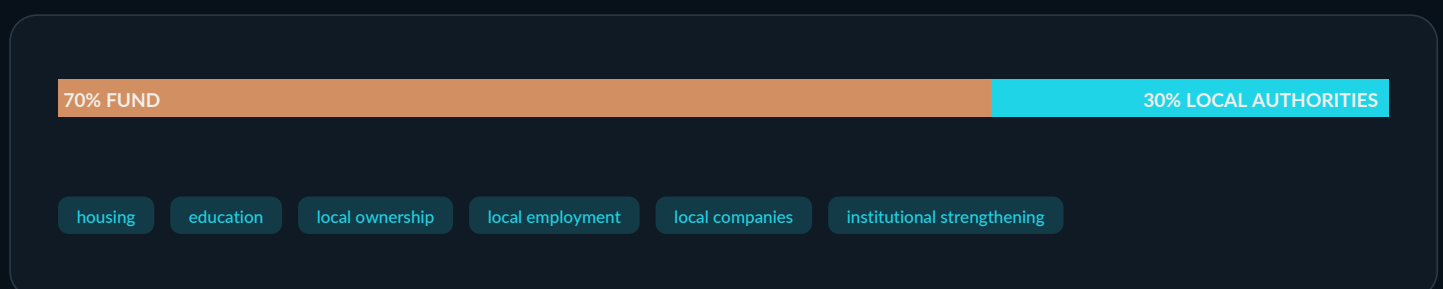
- economic gravity
- local work
- future

Ownership could be shared between the fund and local authorities, for example 70/30. Part of the budget should support trustworthy local institutions, non-extremist political actors, administration, education, media and governance. Stability is not only concrete, energy and water. It is also politics.

The same logic applies to productive capacity. The violent seizure of private farms in Zimbabwe is an important warning. Land reform as a political slogan is one thing. Brutal seizure of private productive assets is another. It destroyed working structures, contributed to economic collapse and showed what happens when political force replaces institutional competence, property protection and operational continuity. Productive capacity cannot be transferred through violence without destroying the architecture that made it productive.

This does not mean pretending that colonial history did not exist. It means understanding that destroying private farms does not build a modern agricultural economy. If local populations are to gain real economic power, they need education, institutions, capital, management competence, technology, property protection and participation in new value creation. Not violent political theatre that collapses the asset itself.

That is why H.S.F. cannot be designed as an extraction machine. It must be profitable, but it must also be structurally beneficial to the regions where it operates. Housing, education, local ownership, local employment, local companies and local institutional strengthening are not cosmetic additions. They are the difference between stabilisation and neocolonialism.



Europe cannot fix the entire world. It cannot stop every war, every regime, every collapse and every crisis. It cannot rebuild all of Africa, the Middle East or Asia. But a serious migration architecture must account for these variables instead of behaving as if every new wave is a surprise.

The current system reacts too late. It waits at the border. It argues about quotas. It produces decisions it does not execute. It creates legal limbo. It allows smugglers to control the first part of the journey. It leaves local communities unprepared. It accepts people without integration architecture. It rejects people without removal architecture. It has no central structure capable of processing the people already inside Europe. It talks about human rights while negotiating with regimes it officially condemns.

That is not a system.

That is a collection of patches.

Migration is not a question of “let them in” or “send them back.” That frame is too small for the problem. Migration is a process that must be designed from source to destination, from verification to integration, from legal entry to legal removal, from local community to geopolitical stabilization.

Europe needs a migration architecture.

No more duct tape.

Mateusz Chrzanowski

System of systems architect



**Europe needs a migration
architecture.**

No more duct tape.