

Can Europe solve its migrant crisis?

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Welcome to the inquiry on the BBC World Service with me, Tanya Beckett. Each week, one question, four expert witnesses and an answer.

When the leaders of nine European countries broke from talks at the end of September in Malta, they had the makings of an agreement to tackle arguably the most complicated problem currently facing the block: over 200,000 migrants have reached the borders of Europe so far in 2023. And the number is growing year on year. The war in Ukraine has certainly added to the recent influx. But underpinning the increase is the number of boats making their way across the Mediterranean from North Africa. Among the pledges was help for Italy to cope with the mass of people heading to its shores and the relocating of some of the arrivals within the EU. There was also talk of more funding to crack down on smugglers. But within days, the nascent agreement had hit a roadblock. Poland and Hungary both opposed to taking in migrants themselves, were not prepared to pay money to their Southern peers to help cover the cost of hosting them.

This week on *The Inquiry* we're asking: Can Europe solve its migrant crisis?

Part 1 – The causes 01:24 – 6:44

Hanne Bejrens, Director of Migration Policy Institute Europe (Brussels)

Part 2 – The shores 06:46 – 11:35

Cathryn Costello, Full Professor of Global Refugee and Migration Law, Sutherland School of Law in University College Dublin

Part 3 – Workers 11:37 – 17:00

Charles Kenny, Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development in Washington DC

Part 4 – Policy 17:03 – 21:20

Martin Ruhs, Migration Policy Center, European University Institute (Florence)

Now we'll return to our question: Can Europe solve its migrant crisis? Europe has tried to stem the flow of migrants by striking deals with other countries outside its borders. But such deals become tangled with difficult questions over whether money used does indeed help solve the problem. The same can be said of efforts to stimulate economies from which migrants originate. Making sure that aid reaches the right people has long been a very tangled question. EU leaders want to come to an agreement but there are fundamental differences over what that agreement would contain because of the differences as to how the problem should be tackled. The migrant crisis has many causes and requires an equal number of solutions. One of the difficulties we faced in making this documentary was getting hold of accurate numbers. The prime ministers of Italy and Britain have recently pledged to exchange intelligence, which is one of the places they need at least to begin. Another would be to front up to their voters that boats full of migrants crossing the Mediterranean is not the cause of the problem, it is in fact just a symptom.