

The new draft EU deportation law:

What you need to know about the EU's push for detection and immigration raids – and how you can mobilise against it

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Many people are worried about what is happening in the United States, particularly when it comes to immigration enforcement. But the European Union (EU) has long been developing its own far-reaching law enforcement approach to migration.

While the context differs, migration is increasingly treated as a security issue on both sides of the Atlantic through expanded detention, faster deportations and growing use of raids, surveillance and checks in everyday life.

This explainer is for anyone who is worried about the direction of EU migration policies. It sets out:

- What is being proposed at EU level
- Why it matters for all of us
- How you can mobilise against it.

It focuses on one of the most concerning parts of the new EU Deportation Law: detection measures, including immigration raids and reporting obligations.



What is the EU currently proposing?

The EU – including your government and elected members of the European Parliament – are negotiating rules that would make it mandatory for authorities to identify, track, detain and deport undocumented people by expanding so-called 'detection measures'.

What are detection measures, and are they new?

Detection measures turn everyday life into a tool of immigration enforcement.

In practice, they include police raids on workplaces and in public spaces, invasive and indiscriminate uses of surveillance technologies, racial profiling, and, in some cases obligations on public service workers in schools and hospitals to report anyone suspected to be undocumented.

Many EU Member States use some detection measures, but they are highly controversial, often challenged in court, and unevenly applied across the EU. What is new, and dangerous, is the attempt to include them in EU law and make them mandatory for all Member States at the same time. Doing so would give these practices new legitimacy, require their expansion across Europe, and make them much harder to challenge or roll back in the future. Together, these measures would legitimise racial profiling and turn schools, hospitals, shelters, workplaces, public transport and even private homes into sites of immigration enforcement.

The table below shows how these detection measures operate in practice, and where they are already being used or debated across the EU.

Detection practice	What does it mean	Examples from EU countries
Police raids: Private homes and shelters	Authorities could enter living spaces to search for undocumented migrants - without a judicial mandate - as well as offices and shelters run by humanitarian organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Germany, police have carried out early-morning home raids to arrest undocumented people, including cases involving people with disabilities.• In Belgium, the proposed "home visit" law would allow police and the Immigration Office to enter people's private homes without their consent and without a judge's authorization, if they suspect someone living there doesn't have regular residence and is not cooperating with deportation procedures.• In France, recent parliamentary debates have included proposals to restrict access to emergency accommodation, alongside statements by migration authorities suggesting that enforcement agents should be able to access to shelters to identify residents.

Police raids: Public services	Authorities could enter hospitals, schools, social services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italian police raided a hospital in Ravenna to collect evidence about doctors who were refusing to send people to detention centres, under the allegation that there were no sufficient grounds to exempt them from detention.
Police raids: Public spaces	Police checks in train stations, buses, or public areas aimed at identifying and detaining undocumented people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> France deployed 4 000 police officers in June 2025 to carry out large-scale identity checks across bus and train stations. Belgium has introduced internal border checks on highways, train stations and airports.
Surveillance and technology	Wider collection and sharing of personal data, including use of biometric tools like fingerprints or facial recognition to track people's movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU is testing in Greece an AI-ready smart-border regime, including cameras and drones. In Italy, EU tests new biometric screening process for migrants at Lampedusa.
Reporting obligations	Teachers, healthcare workers, or social workers could be required to report undocumented people to authorities. Similar measures have existed in some EU countries and are heavily contested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting obligations for civil servants have been in place in Germany since the 1990s, where only education is an exception. Reporting obligations for specific public officials are currently under discussion in Sweden, and are expected to be adopted in 2026.
Racial profiling	Checks and controls based on appearance, language or perceived origin, rather than individual conduct, leading to discriminatory targeting of racialised communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police and border forces across Europe routinely profile and stop people based on the colour of their skin, clothing or religious symbols to check their papers. In 2025, France was condemned for such practices by the European Court on Human Rights. In 2023, a Dutch court banned racial profiling as a practice by border guards.

Where do negotiations stand?

The law is not final - but things are moving fast.

The [draft law](#) proposed by the European Commission says that countries should introduce "efficient and proportionate measures" to detect and apprehend undocumented migrants in order to carry out deportations (Article 6). The language is vague, but this could open the door to stronger harsher migration enforcement practices, with limited safeguards and few possibilities for people to challenge these actions.

EU governments have already agreed on a common position and pushed the proposal further, adding new

enforcement powers such as [home searches and seizures](#). The European Parliament is now reviewing the proposal and deciding whether to accept, change or remove these measures.

Even after the European Parliament vote, negotiations between the Parliament and the Council will continue to reach a final agreement.

This means there is still space to influence the outcome - **and pressure now matters.**

The table below shows who decides what, and where they are in the process:

	Council of the EU	European Parliament
Who they are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National governments of the EU Ministers representing each Member State Elected at national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) Directly elected by EU voters Represent political groups and constituencies
Where things stand	Agreed on a joint position in December 2025	The proposal is under review and amendments are being negotiated. The Parliament is expected to vote on 9 March 2026.
What is being pushed	Added new enforcement powers (Art. 23a) allowing authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search people and their homes Seize personal belongings and electronic devices Use other investigative measures under national law 	Far-right and conservative groups are pushing for tougher detection and apprehension measures. Left and progressive groups want removal of detection measures altogether.

Why does this matter?

Detection measures don't only harm undocumented migrants: they shape everyday life, public services and trust in institutions, with consequences for our societies as a whole.

These measures would change how communities, services, and public institutions function. International human rights experts, including UN Special Rapporteurs, have [warned](#) that the draft EU Deportation Law risks violating fundamental rights.

These concerns are not hypothetical. Europe's own history to see the consequences of systems that single out certain groups of people as the scapegoats of deeper political and societal problems and subjected them to surveillance, control and punishment. More recently, immigration enforcement [practices in the United States](#) - including people killed during ICE immigration raids - have contributed to an unfolding [public health crisis](#), which illustrates how detection-driven systems can escalate into deadly outcomes and deep social fractures.

This is a path the EU must not follow.

What would these detection measures lead to in practice?

1) People would be pushed into fear and invisibility

Stronger detection and reporting measures would punish people simply because of their migration status. Many undocumented migrants would be forced to stay invisible to avoid the risk of being detected, detained, or deported.

This means:

- Avoiding healthcare and/or delaying urgent care, putting lives at risk (for example, pregnant women missing check-ups, children missing vaccinations, or people with chronic illnesses not getting treatment);
- Keeping children out of school;
- Being more exposed to violence, exploitation, and poor living conditions;
- Parents not registering their children's births with authorities, undermining their right to an identity and putting them at risk of statelessness;

Pushing people further into homelessness and preventing access to basic humanitarian or shelter support. Fear and marginalisation increase risks for individuals and directly harm public health and social cohesion for everyone.

2) Doctors, teachers, and social workers would be put in an impossible position

If service providers are required to report undocumented people, they would be forced to act as immigration enforcers.

Healthcare workers, teachers, social workers and public servants would face a dilemma:

- Either respect their professional ethics and protect the people they serve
- Or comply with reporting obligations that go against their core mission and professional ethics

This undermines trust in essential services and makes it harder for professionals to do their jobs properly.

3) Trust in public institutions would be weakened and solidarity would be criminalised

When everyday services become part of immigration control, trust between communities and public institutions breaks down.

People may start to fear:

- Seeking help from public services

- Showing solidarity with neighbours
- Even what happens inside their own homes

People who offer help (neighbours, volunteers, families, faith groups, or civil society organisations) could worry that providing support might expose them or others to police checks, raids, or investigations. Even opening one's home or offering basic assistance could feel risky.

This would have a chilling effect on solidarity and mutual support and poses a direct threat to social cohesion and to the idea of public services as safe spaces for everyone.

4) Violence, discrimination, and threats to life

Detection measures often rely on appearance, language, or perceived origin. This increases the risk of racial profiling and discrimination, affecting not only undocumented migrants but also racialised communities more broadly.

When discrimination is embedded into enforcement practices, it does not stop at unequal treatment. It increases the likelihood of violent interventions, raids and coercive encounters. These dynamics carry a real and foreseeable risk of serious harm, including loss of life.

This is not theoretical: cases of violent interventions and interactions with law enforcement occur regularly, and without accountability or justice for victims. In 2014, for instance, fourteen people died in the Mediterranean Sea after [the Spanish Guardia Civil](#) shot rubber bullets, detonator blanks and smoke canisters against them as they were trying to reach Spain from Morocco. Masked agents regularly beat people passing through the [Balkan route](#) in Bosnia and Croatia. [Polish border guards](#) have been found to beat people trying to cross the border from Belarus.

These deaths are the predictable outcome of systems that normalise racialised suspicion, coercion and the use of force in the name of migration control.

These measures have been – and are being – challenged

Detection measures are not inevitable. They have been resisted in the past - and they are being actively challenged today.

Detection measures, immigration raids and reporting obligations are not new, and neither is resistance to them. Across Europe, similar measures have been - and continue to be - challenged by civil society organisations, human rights activities, professionals, local authorities and affected communities, including:

- In [Germany](#), campaigners and advocates have been fighting reporting obligations for decades. A [campaign](#) focused on access health care is supported by over 80 civil society organisations, with the German doctors' association and German Churches also repeatedly criticising reporting obligations.
- In [Sweden](#), 4,000 health care workers already pledged to commit civil disobedience and refuse to report their patients should the measure for reporting obligations be implemented in the healthcare sector. 90% of [librarians](#) in Sweden contested the proposal.
- In [Belgium](#), a campaign is contesting the legislative proposal for home visits.

At EU level, the draft EU Deportation Law itself is already being challenged, including through a [joint civil society statement](#) signed by more than 250 organisations, calling for the removal of detection measures and immigration raids.

People have come together before, and they are doing so again. This is collective, credible resistance - not inevitability.

Take action

This is a moment for collective action. Across Europe, people are already mobilising to oppose detection measures and immigration raids. You can add your voice and strengthen this momentum in different ways.

Join and support existing mobilisation

Opposition to the draft EU Deportation Law is already growing at EU level.

- [Sign the WeMove petition](#). More information and next steps will follow.



- Follow dedicated social media pages to stay aware and join campaign actions like [@WeKeep_UsSafe](#) (Instagram)

Help spread the word

EU decisions often receive little public attention, despite their far-reaching impact.

- Share this explainer with your networks
- Organise discussions in your workplace, organisation or community
- Help make this information accessible by translating or adapting it for different audiences (contact us if you'd like support)

Put pressure on decision-makers

Elected representatives respond to public scrutiny, especially when they hear from many people at once.

- [Contact](#) your Members of the European Parliament to let them know that we are watching and asking them to delete any mentions to detection measures. Find your MEP [here](#) and in the annex a template email.

Act locally – in your city

Local actors play a key role in protecting access to services and resisting harmful enforcement practices.

- Contact your local City Council or city representatives and ask them to take a stand against this EU law and fulfil their mandate to guarantee services and protection to all inhabitants
- Mobilise with others in your community, including through public meetings, collective statements, or peaceful protest

Learn more

Check out [PICUM's page on the EU deportation law](#) to find out more.



Annex – Template email to write to your Member of the European Parliament (MEP)

Instructions:

- **Timing matters:** We encourage you to send your email before the LIBE Committee vote on 9 March.
- **Who to contact:** You can find MEP contact details here. We recommend prioritising: members of the LIBE Committee and MEPs from your country. If you need to prioritise even more you can choose the MEPs that are members of the LIBE Committee AND from your country.
- **Practical tips:**
 - Keep your message respectful and concise.
 - If relevant, add one sentence about who you are (e.g. civil society worker, health professional, resident, student, etc.).
 - Emails that mention national context or personal experience are more likely to be read.
 - If you contact several MEPs at once, consider using BCC so that email addresses are not publicly shared.
 - Feel free to adapt and personalise the email below - changing wording and especially the subject line helps ensure messages are not filtered.

Email Template

Suggested subject lines (You can adapt or create your own)

- Civil society urges you to reject the Return Regulation – LIBE Committee vote 9 March
- LIBE vote 9 March: Civil society urges rejection of Return Regulation
- Urgent: Say no to the Return Regulation on 9 March
- Civil Society appeal: Reject the Return Regulation on 9 March

Email body:

Dear Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE),

I am writing to you as a *[resident of X / civil society worker / health professional / educator / concerned EU citizen - optional]*, ahead of the LIBE Committee vote scheduled for 9 March.

On 9 March, you will vote on the Parliament's mandate to enter inter-institutional negotiations on the Return Regulation, which would enable coercive, traumatising, and rights-violating measures premised on an imperative of increasing deportation rates

In September 2025, more than [250 civil society organisations called for the rejection](#) of this proposal, and over [95,000 people](#) urged you to vote against it. In February 2026, more than [90 organisations](#) also called attention for you to reject it.

The compromise text you are set to vote on has been reached under a politically constructed sense of urgency which, with no evidence nor consultations. Such a rushed process undermines transparency and democratic scrutiny, particularly for legislation that will affect millions of people across Europe and the societies they live in.

We are especially worried that the text maintains an [obligation to "detect" people](#) in an irregular situation, which risks enabling practices such as:

- workplace and street raids
- intrusive and indiscriminate data sharing and surveillance
- racial profiling
- reporting obligations for professionals in schools, healthcare, and social services

It risks creating a climate of fear and discrimination affecting undocumented people, those with precarious status, and racialised communities more broadly. *[please feel free to add any of the reasons mentioned in the Section 3 "What would these detection measures lead to practice?"]*

For these reasons, I strongly **urge you to vote against the proposed text.**

Best regards,