

**Libera Università Internazionale
degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli**

PREMIO TESI D'ECCELLENZA

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in the European Union:
A Critical Discourse Analysis
of the New Pact on Migration
and Asylum**

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2023-2024

Libera Università Internazionale
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Working Paper n. 6/2023-2024

Publication date: December 2025

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ISBN 979-12-5596-364-6

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Luiss University Press is an imprint
of Luiss Guido Carli
Viale Pola 12, 00198 Roma
Tel. 06 85225485
E-mail universitypress@luiss.it
www.luissuniversitypress.it

Securitizing Migration in the European Union: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

By Jacopo Rosati

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes an in-depth analysis of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum to examine whether its adoption by the European Union, acting as a collective security actor, has successfully securitized the EU migration and asylum policy area. According to this research, securitization through the New Pact on Migration and Asylum can only be deemed successful if three specific conditions are met: (1) Speech acts in migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020; (2) The Communication 2020/609 of the European Commission, which proposes the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, can be identified as a securitizing move in the EU migration and asylum policy area; (3) The audience eventually accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances. Employing the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis, this article has demonstrated that all three conditions have been respected, thereby confirming the securitization of the EU migration and asylum policy area. Specifically, the analysis conducted has proved that the Pact introduces measures aimed at strengthening the EU border controls and enhancing cooperation with third countries to address the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling, while also protecting potential refugees and legal migrants. Positioned within the critical branch of International Security Studies, this paper contributes to debates on the securitization of migration in the European Union by focusing on the most recent developments in the EU migration and asylum policies and showing that the New Pact can be rigorously studied through securitization theory.

Keywords: New Pact on Migration and Asylum; European Union; European Commission; securitization; speech act; securitizing move; audience; migration; asylum.

INTRODUCTION

Since taking office in December 2019, the von der Leyen Commission has propelled migration management to the forefront of the European Union (EU) policy agenda. Confronted with increasing deaths and arrivals of irregular migrants at the EU external borders, the European Commission has prioritized the establishment of the “New Pact on Migration and Asylum”, a comprehensive framework aimed at managing and regularizing migration flows within the EU. First presented via Communication 2020/609 on September 23, 2020, the New Pact was approved by the European Parliament on April 10, 2024, and formally adopted by the Council on May 14, 2024.¹ Crucially, it seeks to provide a structured and human approach to migration, emphasizing principles of solidarity, responsibility, and the protection of human rights when addressing migration and asylum matters. However, the adoption of the New Pact has also sparked apprehension regarding its underlying motivations. Some scholars argue that it may be the culmination of a prolonged process of securitization, both at the EU level and within individual Member States.² Similarly, many NGOs have argued that the new border controls will operate based on a legal fiction, treating individuals arriving at the EU external borders as if they were not present on EU territory, thereby resulting in fewer guarantees and a higher risk of border rejection.³

Given this context, this paper seeks to contribute to the debate on securitization in the European Union by addressing the following research question: “Has the EU migration and asylum policy area been securitized with the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum?”. Within the framework of this paper, the term “securitization” is understood following the original definition given by the Copenhagen School, which views it as the subjective process by which an issue is transformed into a security threat and treated accordingly.⁴ Considering this, the research argues that securitization through the Pact can only be deemed successful if elements associated with this concept (e.g., threats, solutions, referent objects of security) emerge throughout the entire political process that led to the adoption of the document. The latter includes the proposal stage, negotiations with Member States, and final approval. Clearly, this analysis does not evaluate the effectiveness

¹ European Commission, *Pact on Migration and Asylum: A Common EU System to Manage Migration*. [Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu), Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 21 May 2024.

² C. Conte and B. Yavcan, *Reflection Paper on the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum*. Migration Policy Group, 23 April 2024.

³ C. Bouvier, “More than 160 Civil Society Organisations Call on MEPs to Vote down Harmful EU Migration Pact - PICUM”, *PICUM*, 13 February 2024.

⁴ See B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1998. Also see M. Ceccorulli, *Migrazioni e rifugiati*. In P. Foradori and G. Giacomello (Eds.), *Sicurezza globale. Le nuove minacce*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2014, pp. 23-26.

of the New Pact, as it has been approved but is not yet applicable until 2026. Nevertheless, these stages, along with the previously mentioned elements associated with securitization, have been modeled in the form of three conditions that this paper defines as essential for answering the research question. By demonstrating the fulfillment of all conditions, the investigation provides a positive answer to the research question by showing that the EU, through the adoption of the New Pact, securitizes the EU migration and asylum policy area to address the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration.

To support this argument, the paper is structured as follows. The first section presents a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the securitization of migration within the European Union. It identifies the main debates and delineates the research gap that this study intends to address. The second section outlines the theoretical framework, which builds upon the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory and adapts its conceptual foundations to the EU context. Building on this basis, the third section introduces Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis⁵ (CDA hereinafter) as the methodological tool to operationalize securitization theory. Finally, the analytical section applies Fairclough's CDA to test the three conditions formulated to determine whether securitization has occurred through the New Pact. More precisely, the first phase,⁶ corresponding to textual analysis, examines whether relevant speech acts in the field of migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020, thereby verifying the first condition. The second phase, the discourse analysis, evaluates whether the European Commission's Communication 2020/609, which proposed the New Pact, can be identified as a securitizing move within EU migration and asylum policy, addressing the second condition. The third and final phase, corresponding to social analysis, investigates whether the audience accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances.

⁵ N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (1st edition), Longman Publishing, Harlow, 1995.

⁶ See N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (1st edition), cit.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Following the end of the Cold War, migration emerged as a security issue within International Security Studies (ISS hereinafter), beginning to move beyond its traditional state- and military-centered focus.⁷ Since then, the phenomenon of migration has received enormous attention worldwide. Nevertheless, this literature review focuses primarily on studies examining the migration-security nexus within the European Union. This choice is due to space constraints, the frequent application of securitization theory to migration in the EU,⁸ and the paper's interest in the analysis of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Within the critical strand of ISS, the Copenhagen School, the Paris School, and the Aberystwyth School are the three most influential theoretical approaches that have focused on migration in the European context. Also called the human security approach, the Aberystwyth School highlights the need to broaden the security agenda by privileging the individual as the referent object of security instead of the state. However, while being radically opposed to traditional approaches to security, the Aberystwyth School shares with them the view that security is a condition or state of being that must be achieved.⁹ More precisely, the human security approach believes security is tied to the achievement of a condition of emancipation.¹⁰ In Booth's words: "Emancipation is the freeing of people (...) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do".¹¹ Therefore, if security equals emancipation, it follows that true security is only achieved when the welfare of human beings is ensured. Applying this definition to international migration clarifies why many scholars have used the human security approach to analyze the migration-security nexus in Europe. For instance, Nadig's article of 2002 denounced human smuggling in the EU during the 1990s.¹² Similarly, Susana Ferreira's book, *Human Security and Migration in Europe's Southern Borders*, examines the impact of the EU immigration and asylum policies during the 2015 migration crisis.¹³ Using Italy and Spain as case studies, Ferreira demonstrates the EU's failure to develop a common policy to effectively manage migratory flows and protect migrants

⁷ B. Buzan, and L. Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (1st edition), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009, p. 2.

⁸ *Ivi*, p. 18.

⁹ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, In P. D. Williams and M. McDonald (Eds.), *Security Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge, Abington, New York, 2018, p. 107.

¹⁰ B. Ağır, O. Mutlu, and B. Gürsoy, "Internationally Well-Intentioned but Institutionally Failed: Human Security Network," *Review of International Affairs* 76, no. 1193, 2024, p. 103.

¹¹ K. Booth, "Security and Emancipation". *Review of International Studies*, 1991, 17(4), p. 319.

¹² See A. Nadig, "Human Smuggling, National Security, and Refugee Protection". *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2002, 15(1), pp.1–25.

¹³ S. Ferreira, *Human Security and Migration in Europe's Southern Borders* (1st edition). Springer, Berlin, 2018.

crossing the Mediterranean Sea, opting instead for a deterrence approach.¹⁴ In summary, the Aberystwyth School strongly opposes the state-centric focus of traditional approaches and supports the enlargement of the traditional security agenda to include new security threats.

Unlike the human security approach of the Aberystwyth School, both the Copenhagen and Paris Schools focus on security as a process of social construction. More precisely, they argue that it is the securitization process, i.e. the process of defining something as a threat, that should be the primary focus of investigation.¹⁵ The Copenhagen School, known for conceptualizing securitization theory first, is among the theoretical approaches that have associated migration and security the most. Originating partially from seminal works by Barry Buzan, such as *People, States, and Fear* in 1983,¹⁶ the formal establishment of the Copenhagen School can be traced back to its 1998 book *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, co-authored with Wæver and de Wilde.¹⁷ In this foundational text, the school takes a constructivist approach claiming that objective security issues do not inherently exist. Instead, any issue can be socially constructed as an existential threat through speech acts by political actors and accepted by their audience.¹⁸ Thanks to the flexibility of its core concept – the securitization process – the securitization approach has developed outside the Copenhagen School framework and broadened to the extent that nowadays its assumptions are also used by liberals, as well as critical theorists, and poststructuralists.¹⁹ Starting with the Copenhagen School's interpretation, it is worth mentioning that Atahan Demirkol published a quantitative study in 2022 examining 24 EU countries to assess whether the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis had triggered securitizing discourses against immigrants in the EU. His empirical research did not find solid evidence to support the initial hypothesis.²⁰ Conversely, an article by Iov and Bogdan of 2017 presents the opposite outcome. They argue that events such as the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Arab Spring have intensified migration flows and led to the perception of migration as an existential security threat, constructed through speech acts by political leaders and the media.²¹ Similar analyses on the impact of public speeches on the securitization of migration have been conducted focusing

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ W. Walters, *Migration and Security*. In J. P. Burgess (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of New Security Studies*, Routledge, Abington, New York, 2010, p. 2019.

¹⁶ B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983.

¹⁷ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition).

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 33-34.

¹⁹ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, cit., pp. 105-106.

²⁰ A. Demirkol, "An Empirical Analysis of Securitization Discourse in the European Union," *Migration Letters* 19, no. 3 (2022): 273-286.

²¹ C. Iov and M. Bogdan, "Securitization of Migration in the European Union – between Discourse and Practical Action", *Research and Science Today*, 1(13), 2017.

on individual European countries, including France,²² Germany,²³ and Italy.²⁴ Over time, the Copenhagen School's securitization theory has been criticized for its narrow focus on speech acts. In this context, while some authors have continued to use the theory as originally developed by the School, they have reinforced it by incorporating Critical Discourse Analysis. This methodology allows to go beyond speech acts and uncover the hidden meanings within them. For example, Lindqvist used Critical Discourse Analysis to demonstrate the real reasons why the British media securitized migration during the Calais crisis.²⁵ Similarly, Nissander conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis to show that the securitization of migration that occurred through speeches by Commission representatives was rooted in contrasting narratives.²⁶ Fechner also employed this methodology to reveal the hidden meanings of the securitization of migration in the Maltese media.²⁷

The Paris School further critiqued the Copenhagen School pointing to the importance of concrete practices happening on the ground, the role of institutions, and contemporary technologies.²⁸ In the context of the EU, a significant contribution to discussions surrounding the mechanisms behind the securitization of migration came from Didier Bigo.²⁹ He argued that while scholars should not neglect the importance of speech acts, the securitization of migration also stems from the specific field of security professionals and administrative practices like risk assessment, population profiling, and statistical calculations. Similarly, building on Bigo's ideas, Jef Huysmans explored the evolving management of migration in Europe, showing how discursive mechanisms have become

²² See E. Sweet, *The Securitization of Migration in France: The Shifting Threat of Migration: From a Threat to Culture to a Source of Terrorism* [Thesis], 2017. Also see O. Wæver, *European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe*, In: Howarth, D. & Torfing, J. (Eds.) *Discourse Theory in European Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005.

²³ O. Wæver, *European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe*, In: Howarth, D. & Torfing, J. (Eds.) *Discourse Theory in European Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005.

²⁴ R. Armillei, "Boat Arrivals and the 'Threat' to Italian National Security: Between a 'Moral Panic' Approach and the EU's Failure to Create a Cohesive Asylum-Seeking Policy," *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 2017, 12(1).

²⁵ P. Lindqvist, *Welcome to the new jungle. A discourse analysis of the securitization of migration in the Calais crisis in British media* [Thesis], 2017.

²⁶ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum* [Thesis], 2021.

²⁷ L. Fechner, *Border Burden? - A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Securitization of Migration in the Maltese Media Discourse* [Thesis], 2023.

²⁸ C. Benam, "Emergence of a "Big Brother" in Europe: Border Control and Securitization of Migration", *Insight Turkey*, 2011, 13(3), pp. 191–207.

²⁹ D. Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2002, 27(1), pp. 63-92.

increasingly embedded in professional and technological processes.³⁰ Léonard and Kaunert (2020) further examined securitizing migration practices focusing on the main activities of Frontex. However, some authors contest that migration has been securitized in the EU. Neal (2009: 351-52), for example, argues that a “risk approach” to security threats, rather than successful securitizing efforts, led to the establishment of Frontex.

As demonstrated, many scholars have argued that migration has been securitized over time in the EU. Despite using different interpretations of securitization theory, authors such as Bigo,³¹ Huysmans,³² Sweet,³³ and Wæver³⁴ have all demonstrated that, over the past three decades, immigrants have increasingly been perceived as a security problem and EU laws have gradually made it more difficult for them to enter Europe. These preoccupations have been shared by international organizations, like the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which have denounced human rights violations at the EU external borders.³⁵ Overall, it is undeniable that the Common European Asylum System has evolved towards stricter rules, reducing the possibilities for third-country nationals and stateless persons to enter Europe.

In this context, the recent adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum has opened a gap in the security studies literature concerning the securitization of migration in the EU. Indeed, given that the New Pact has been adopted in its final form but will only become applicable by Member States in 2026,³⁶ a limited number of research has examined the securitization of migration through this document. Therefore, it is still unclear whether the New Pact represents an additional piece of legislation contributing to the securitization of the EU migration and asylum policy area begun in the past. Despite these constraints, this paper seeks to fill this gap by answering the following research question: “Has the EU migration and asylum policy area been securitized with the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum?”. Specifically, the article will develop its own

³⁰ J. Huysmans (2006). *The Politics of Insecurity. Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU* (1st edition). Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group.

³¹ D. Bigo, “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease”, cit.

³² See J. Huysmans, *Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of ‘Securitizing’ Societal Issues*. In R. Miles & D. Thranhardt (Eds.), *Migration and European Integration. The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Pinter, London, 1995, pp. 53-72. And also see J. Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity. Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU* (1st edition). Routledge, Abington, New York, 2006.

³³ E. Sweet, *The Securitization of Migration in France: The Shifting Threat of Migration: From a Threat to Culture to a Source of Terrorism* [Thesis], 2017.

³⁴ O. Wæver, *European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe*, cit.

³⁵ Amnesty International. *The EU Must Protect the Lives and the Rights of People Seeking Safety in Europe*, 2023.

³⁶ European Commission, *Commission presents the Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum* [Press release], 12 June 2024.

securitization theory, arguing that the securitization of migration through the New Pact can only be deemed successful if elements associated with this concept (e.g., threats, solutions, referent objects) emerge throughout the entire political process of the Pact. The latter includes the proposal stage, negotiations with Member States, and final approval of the Pact. As just said, this study is aware of existing limitations. For this reason, the present research will not develop a securitization theory based on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the New Pact, as it has been approved but is not yet applicable. In summary, this paper aims to contribute to the literature on the securitization of migration in the EU by analyzing the most recent developments in the EU migration and asylum policy, thereby showing that the New Pact can be examined with scientific rigor.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anchoring a theoretical foundation to the assumptions made in this project will not only clarify the paper's position and contributions within the existing literature but also demonstrate that the New Pact on Migration and Asylum can be examined with scientific rigor.

2.1 The Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory: A Point of Departure

The process through which an issue is socially constructed and becomes a security threat is at the basis of the theory of securitization as imagined by the Copenhagen School.³⁷ More precisely, the School contends that security threats are socially constructed as such through "speech acts" by state actors, such as national leaders.³⁸ Hence, speaking security is more than merely talking because "it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done".³⁹ Essentially, a speech act is a performative action because speaking about security means "to do it" and to cause things to happen.⁴⁰ In this context, delivering a speech act means framing something as an existential threat, thereby elevating it above the political sphere because it needs to be treated differently. As a result, when a problem is dramatized and presented as a matter of supreme priority through security discourse, securitizing actors advocate the need and the right to use any necessary means to address and block it. Hence, securitization begins when an agent labels an issue as an existential threat to something, and the

³⁷ S. Léonard and C. Kaunert, "The Securitisation of Migration in the European Union: Frontex and Its Evolving Security Practices", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2020, 48(6), pp. 1417-1429.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., p. 26.

⁴⁰ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, cit., p. 102.

audience agrees with this designation.⁴¹ Only once the problem under examination is successfully securitized, can it be approached using extraordinary measures such as threat, defense, and state-centered solutions.⁴² In conclusion, precisely because of the effects of these acts, the Copenhagen School argues that it is always desirable that most issues are best desecuritized, i.e. moved out from the security sphere.⁴³

In the context of the securitization process, what matters for the Copenhagen School is not showing if a threat is real or not. Instead, the critical point that Buzan and his colleagues emphasize is that when states' representatives securitize an issue – independently of its acceptance or not – it becomes a political fact with relevant consequences, as securitization causes the actor to operate differently.⁴⁴ Following this logic, the School highlights the fact that “something is a security problem when the [political] elites declare it to be so”.⁴⁵ Thus, if security has nothing to do with objectiveness and securitizing an issue is nothing but a political subjective act done to pursue the national elites' interests, at least in theory, securitization can never only be imposed. Indeed, according to Buzan and his colleagues,⁴⁶ it is the audience's acceptance of the speech act that determines the success or failure of the securitization move. As evident from what has been said so far, several factors contribute to the definition and potential success of the securitization process for the Copenhagen School. These factors, referred to as “facilitating conditions” by Bourbeau,⁴⁷ fall into two categories: (1) the internal, with linguistic-grammatical factors, and (2) the external, with contextual and social factors. The first category almost exclusively looks at the speech act, focusing on how well it follows the syntax and logic of security. To be a successful speech, it should create a convincing narrative including an existential threat.⁴⁸ The external category encompasses the broader context of the act.⁴⁹ More precisely, on one side it looks at the securitizing actor, its position in society, its authority, and its legitimacy; on the other side, an eye is also kept on the threat itself, trying to understand if it is a realistic and legitimate issue.⁵⁰ All these

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² O. Wæver (1995). *Securitization and Desecuritization*. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On Security* (pp. 46-87). Columbia University Press. p. 65.

⁴³ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, cit., p. 103.

⁴⁴ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., p. 30.

⁴⁵ O. Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, p. 54.

⁴⁶ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., p. 25.

⁴⁷ P. Bourbeau, *Securitization*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2015, pp. 395–99.

⁴⁸ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, cit., p. 104.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

elements influence the possibility that the audience will accept the proposed securitizing move.⁵¹ If this latter accepts it, then the issue is moved out of normal politics and enters the realm of security.⁵² Here, extraordinary measures can be taken to block the existential threat⁵³. For the Copenhagen School,⁵⁴ public issues exist on a spectrum that ranges from non-politicized (not addressed by the state), to politicized (part of public policy), to securitized. As said earlier, when securitized issues are successfully framed as existential threats they are removed from ordinary politics. In this context, “security” elevates politics beyond the established rules and presents a problem as either a special kind of politics or above it (*Ibidem*).

2.2 Adapting Securitization Theory to the European Union Context

This paper adopts the Copenhagen School’s definition of securitization as the subjective process by which an issue is transformed into a security threat and treated accordingly,⁵⁵ while retaining its emphasis on speech acts and securitizing moves. However, some adjustments are required to fit this framework to the European Union context.

A first conceptual issue concerns the key role that the Copenhagen School assigns to the state and its representatives in performing security speech acts. According to this approach, the state is both the securitizing actor and the referent object to be protected, regardless of the security sector involved. This assumption clashes with the paper’s idea that the European Union can also perform speech acts and initiate a securitization process, thereby behaving as a securitizing actor. To solve this inconsistency and maintain a supranational level of analysis, this study draws on Sperling and Webber’s notion of the EU as a collective security actor developed in “The European Union: security governance and collective securitisation”.⁵⁶ The authors argue that, in response to growing transnational security threats, states have progressively delegated security functions to intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the EU.⁵⁷ As a result, these organizations have begun to assume responsibility for identifying, interpreting and addressing threats on behalf of their members. This process, called “collective securitization” describes the ability of an international organization to claim and exercise its right

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., 23-24.

⁵⁵ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., pp. 23-26.

⁵⁶ J. Sperling and M. Webber, “The European Union: Security Governance and Collective Securitisation”, *West European Politics*, 2019, 42(2).

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

to govern by initiating and managing – not necessarily solving – securitizing processes within its jurisdiction.⁵⁸ Empirical studies have demonstrated the relevance of this framework, revealing that several threats have progressively emerged within the EU and have been managed by the Union in its capacity as a securitizing actor. For example, Ceccorulli,⁵⁹ as cited by Nissander,⁶⁰ showed that the concept of collective securitization has found concrete application in the EU migration and border policy area.⁶¹ In this context, she also demonstrated that the securitization took place without the extraordinary measures suggested by the Copenhagen School but rather with ordinary EU measures.⁶² This confirms the feasibility of using the concept of collective securitization in our article to show that the EU can act as a securitizing agent capable of initiating and completing a securitization process in the migration and asylum policy area through the adoption of the New Pact. In this framework, the European Commission is identified as the sole institution capable of performing speech acts on behalf of the European Union when acting as a collective security actor. More precisely, taking inspiration from Nissander,⁶³ this article will focus on statements issued by President Ursula von der Leyen, Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, and Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, as they represent the Commission in matters of migration and asylum. The reason why this paper has chosen to focus exclusively on the Commission is because it is the EU institution responsible for proposing legislation, according to Article 17 of the TEU.⁶⁴ Since a successful speech act must justify the proposal of a securitizing move, the Commission's declarations need to be monitored to understand whether the EU is engaging in a collective securitization process through the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

A second conceptual adjustment relates to the adoption of exceptional measures. The Copenhagen School⁶⁵ associates securitization with extraordinary actions that move issues beyond normal politics. Yet, this assumption is ill-suited to the EU, where governance operates through institutionalized procedures. Drawing on the Paris School, particularly Didier Bigo and Jef Huysmans, this paper adopts a broader understanding of securitization as a process that unfolds through routine

⁵⁸ *Ivi*, p. 254.

⁵⁹ M. Ceccorulli, "Back to Schengen: the Collective Securitisation of the EU Free-Border Area", *West European Politics*, 2019, 42, pp. 302–322.

⁶⁰ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit.

⁶¹ See M. Ceccorulli, "Back to Schengen: the Collective Securitisation of the EU Free-Border Area", cit.

⁶² *Ivi*, pp. 314–315.

⁶³ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit., pp. 30–31.

⁶⁴ European Union, *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, OJ C 326, 26 October 2012.

⁶⁵ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., pp. 23–24.

practices and administrative activities rather than through dramatic or exceptional acts.⁶⁶ Bigo notably argued that the securitization of migration emerges from the interplay between speech acts, social mobilisation, and the everyday work of security professionals.⁶⁷ Similarly, Léonard and Kaunert highlight how non-discursive practices—such as the creation of institutional bodies, adoption of policies, or technological border controls—can equally constitute securitizing moves.⁶⁸ Accordingly, this paper contends that a successful securitization process in the EU migration and asylum policy area does not require exceptional measures but rather ordinary EU instruments, including communications, recommendations, directives, and regulations. Securitizing moves can therefore take the form of legislative proposals or policy initiatives that remain within EU legal boundaries and are subsequently implemented by Member States.

A final clarification is needed regarding the role of the audience. As in the Copenhagen School, audience acceptance remains a precondition for successful securitization. However, given that the EU functions as a collective security actor, the relevant audience must be understood as the Member States composing the Union. Sperling and Webber⁶⁹ describe the continuous negotiations between the securitizing actor (the EU) and its audience (the organization's member states) regarding opportune policy responses to threats as “recursive interaction”. This term suggests that the audience is a constitutive element of the securitizing actor: they engage in dialogues and reach compromises. Sometimes the audience can reject or significantly modify the securitizing move proposed by the EU, resulting in security policy outcomes that differ from the original proposals.⁷⁰ Without the audience's acceptance of the securitizing move, the securitization process cannot proceed, as the envisaged policy instruments cannot be adopted, and the threat cannot be addressed. However, the power dynamics existing between EU institutions and Member States can influence the negotiation process.

To sum up, while this paper adopts the Copenhagen School's understanding of securitization as a process driven by speech acts and securitizing moves, it complements this framework with the Paris School's attention to everyday practices and Sperling and Webber's theory of collective securitization. These conceptual refinements allow a more accurate analysis of the EU's role as a supranational securitizing actor and provide the theoretical foundation for examining the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

⁶⁶ J. Nyman, *Securitization*, cit., p. 103, p. 107.

⁶⁷ D. Bigo, D. Bigo, “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease”, cit.

⁶⁸ S. Léonard and C. Kaunert, “The Securitisation of Migration in the European Union: Frontex and Its Evolving Security Practices”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2020, 48(6).

⁶⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 242-243.

⁷⁰ S. Lucarelli, J. Sperling and M. Webber, *Collective Securitisation and Security Governance in the European Union* (1st edition). Routledge, Abingdon, New York, 2020, p. 242

2.3 Three Conditions for Successful Securitization

At this point, it is essential to unite the previously discussed components, thus applying the developed securitization theory to the case of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. According to this research, in the EU migration and asylum policy area, the European Union – represented by the European Commission – can potentially act as a collective security actor. Only President Ursula von der Leyen, Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, and Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson are recognized as capable of performing security speech acts in the name of the EU. These speech acts, which might coincide with public statements, should identify and frame issues as security threats. Successful speech acts usually justify the need for the European Commission to initiate a securitizing move, which involves proposing EU policy instruments to address identified threats. These instruments can take the form of non-binding measures (e.g., communications, recommendations, and opinions) or legislative binding acts (e.g., regulations, directives, and decisions). However, determining when securitizing moves are supported by explicit speech acts is difficult, given that these moves consist of ordinary policies that are continuously implemented. As a result, it is assumed that securitizing moves can occur even without explicit security speech acts justifying it, resulting in partial rather than complete securitization. Once a securitizing move is initiated, the role of the audience – identified in the EU Member States – becomes crucial during the negotiations for the adoption of the securitizing move. Indeed, although the audience can significantly modify the proposed policy instruments, the securitizing process stops if it does not eventually accept the move.

Clarified the theoretical framework, the connection with the article's research question – “Has the EU migration and asylum policy area been securitized with the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum?” – becomes clear. This paper argues that securitization through the New Pact can only be deemed successful if elements associated with this concept (e.g., threats, solutions, referent objects) emerge throughout the entire political process that goes from the proposal to the adoption of the Pact. In other words, this research will consider the area of EU migration and asylum policy to be successfully securitized because of the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum only if: (1) Speech acts in migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020; (2) The Communication 2020/609 of the European Commission, which proposes the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, can be identified as a securitizing move in the EU migration and asylum policy area; (3) The audience eventually accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances. The reasons why these three conditions have been defined in these terms will be explained throughout the article. What needs to be restated here is that the securitization theory and the three conditions set for answering the research question do not seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of the New Pact.

Indeed, although the Pact and its related legislative acts came recently into force, they will not be applicable until 2026.⁷¹

3. METHODOLOGY

To operationalize the range of theoretical assumptions discussed in the previous paragraph, this section introduces the methodological technique of Critical Discourse Analysis as developed by Norman Fairclough. It represents the analytical approach guiding the article through the answer to the research question.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA hereinafter) is a qualitative research methodology designed to uncover the relationships between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) the larger social and cultural structures, and processes within which they exist (Fairclough, 1995: 132). By analyzing these interactions, CDA aims to reveal how texts, discourses, and practices are created and how they shape power relations within their social context (*Ibidem*). Specifically, this research employs Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA (1995) and integrates it with the securitization theory of this study. This combination is widely accepted in academia, with scholars such as Chaffee,⁷² Fechner,⁷³ Lindqvist,⁷⁴ and Danesh and his colleagues,⁷⁵ recognizing Fairclough's model as one of the most influential forms of CDA in the literature and one of the most used in securitization analysis.

To find meaningful insights for the research applying it, Fairclough's CDA involves a three-phase analysis: description (textual analysis), interpretation (discourse analysis), and explanation (social analysis).⁷⁶ The first phase, corresponding to textual analysis, involves examining the selected documents to identify specific lexical themes. The second phase, discourse analysis, explores

⁷¹ European Commission. *Questions and Answers: Explanatory Memo on the Pact on Migration and Asylum*, European Commission, 16 May 2024.

⁷² I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses* [Thesis], 2023 .

⁷³ L. Fechner, *Border Burden? - A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Securitization of Migration in the Maltese Media Discourse* [Thesis], 2023.

⁷⁴ P. Lindqvist, *Welcome to the new jungle. A discourse analysis of the securitization of migration in the Calais crisis in British media* [Thesis], 2017.

⁷⁵ A. Danesh, F. Aghagolzadeh, and P. Maftoon, "Turning Quantitative: An Analytic Scale to Do Critical Discourse Analysis", *Journal of Language and Translation*, 2019, 9(2), pp. 1–16.

⁷⁶ N. Fairclough, *Language and power* (1st edition), Longman Publishing, Harlow, 1989. Also see N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (1st edition), Longman Publishing, Harlow, 1995.

how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. In other words, it seeks to reveal the underlying discourses and narratives that the authors of the texts under consideration seek to convey through words. The final phase, social analysis, focuses on understanding how specific discourses and narratives fit into a broader social and cultural context, thus revealing specific power dynamics at play. In this research, “discourse” refers to the elements and themes identified through textual analysis, while “narrative” describes the specific ways in which these discourses are articulated and framed in texts, reflecting the strategies used by different actors to assert power and achieve particular goals.

3.2 Adapting Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis to the Securitization Theory

Fairclough’s CDA will be used to verify the three conditions for successful securitization outlined in section 2.3, ultimately answering the research question of this paper. For this reason, the three phases of CDA have been adapted to fit the securitization theory and the three conditions developed in this research. The first phase, textual analysis, will examine whether the first condition for successful securitization is respected: “Speech acts in migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020”. To assess this condition, the analysis will employ specific linguistic categories: *granularity of detail* (vague or precise), *naming and wording choices*, *adverbs*, and *adjectives*. These categories, developed by Strauss and Feiz,⁷⁷ have been widely applied in ISS, as demonstrated by Isabella Chaffee in her analysis of power dynamics during the negotiations for the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.⁷⁸ Drawing on these authors, this study will apply the mentioned techniques to examine six public speeches by key representatives of the European Commission: Ursula von der Leyen, Margaritis Schinas, and Ylva Johansson. These speeches can only be labeled as security speech acts, and thus satisfy the first condition, if they present elements associated with securitization (e.g., threats, solutions, referent objects) and justify the need for a securitizing move.

The second phase of CDA, corresponding to discourse analysis, will be used to evaluate the second condition for successful securitization: “The Communication 2020/609 of the European Commission, which proposes the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, can be identified as a securitizing move in the EU migration and asylum policy area”. To conduct this analysis, the paper will employ the techniques of intertextuality and interdiscursivity developed by Fairclough.⁷⁹ Intertextuality refers to how a text relates to other texts. In other words, this

⁷⁷ S. Strauss and P. Feiz, *Discourse Analysis. Putting our Worlds into Words*, Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2013, pp. 321-322.

⁷⁸ I. Chaffee, “An Internal “Press”-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses”, cit.

⁷⁹ N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, cit.

technique seeks to determine the homogeneity or heterogeneity of texts by examining similarities between the discourses and narratives they contain. Differently, interdiscursivity explores how texts are organized according to conventions and how they construct various narratives.⁸⁰ In light of this, the second condition will be considered fulfilled only if the discourses and narratives emerging from the previous textual analysis of the public speeches align with those identified in the European Commission's Communication 2020/609. To guide this analysis, the following questions will be considered: Are there discourses related to threats and solutions? Do the discourses address themes like efficiency, urgency, solidarity, and division? What narratives are conveyed through certain discourses? Are there consistent narratives across all the analyzed documents?

The final phase of CDA, corresponding to social analysis, will be exploited to assess the respect of the third condition for successful securitization: "The audience eventually accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances". More precisely, social analysis in this article aims to reveal the power dynamics at play between the European Commission (acting on behalf of the EU as a collective security actor) and the Member States (as the audience) within the broader social context of the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. To ensure compatibility with CDA principles, this final analysis will draw on Fairclough's theory of "power in discourse" from *Language and Power*,⁸¹ as well as Chaffee's research on the New Pact negotiations.⁸² The following questions will help navigate these dynamics: Which are the emerging power dynamics? Have the Member States tried to alter the Commission's proposals under the New Pact? Has the Commission exercised its authority to keep its original proposals? What is the final result?

3.3 Choice of Material

The analytical part of this paper mostly relies on primary sources to answer the research question. The only secondary sources are academic contributions from Fairclough⁸³, Strauss and Feiz,⁸⁴ Chaffee,⁸⁵ and Nissander,⁸⁶ and are used to

⁸⁰ Ivi, pp. 8-10.

⁸¹ N. Fairclough, *Language and power*, cit.

⁸² I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit.

⁸³ N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, cit. and N. Fairclough, *Language and power*, cit.

⁸⁴ S. Strauss and P. Feiz. *Discourse Analysis. Putting our Worlds into Words*, cit.

⁸⁵ I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit.

⁸⁶ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit., pp. 30-31.

provide a solid foundation for the analysis conducted. As just mentioned, primary sources constitute the almost totality of the empirical material used, and they vary depending on the dimension of Fairclough's CDA being considered. For the first phase, taking inspiration from Nissander,⁸⁷ the empirical material consists of six public speeches delivered by the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, and Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson. These speeches, transcribed and available in the appendix (A through F), were retrieved from the Commission's search engine "Press Corner".⁸⁸ The selection criteria for this material included specific tags (*migration*, *asylum*, *security*), document type (*speech*), the names of the mentioned EU representatives, and publication dates (December 1, 2019 [when the von der Leyen Commission took office] to December 31, 2020 [a few months after the presentation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum]). The end date was chosen because von der Leyen, Schinas, and Johansson delivered several speeches in the weeks following the presentation of the New Pact, which I believe would contribute to a more comprehensive analysis.

The second phase of CDA compares previously identified speeches with Communication 2020/609, i.e. a non-binding document published by the European Commission on September 23, 2020, in which it proposed the New Pact on Migration and Asylum to other EU institutions. This document is the only new source introduced in this phase of CDA. It was obtained from Eur-Lex,⁸⁹ the official site managed by the Publications Office of the European Union, which provides access to EU legislation and preparatory documents. The search criteria included "preparatory documents", "September 2020", "Communication", "European Commission", and "Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice".

The third phase of CDA analyzes Communication 2020/609 and the opinions of Member States during the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact. Following the same approach used by Chaffee,⁹⁰ the Member States' opinions were identified based on national parliament statements made during these negotiations. More precisely, these documents were initially searched through the EU Legislative Observatory,⁹¹ the database of the European Parliament monitoring EU decision-making processes.⁹² The search focused on the specific tag "New Pact on Migration and Asylum" and was limited to 2020. The timeframe was not extended to 2024 to exclude legislative proposals that, while associated with the

⁸⁷ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit.

⁸⁸ European Commission. (n.d.). Press corner. European Commission.

⁸⁹ Publications Office of the European Union. (n.d.). EUR-Lex. Europa.eu.

⁹⁰ I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit.

⁹¹ European Parliament. (n.d.). Legislative Observatory. Europa.eu.

⁹² I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit., p. 25.

New Pact, were not originally envisioned within the hypothesized securitizing move, i.e. Communication 2020/609. The resulting legislative procedures were reviewed to identify those containing contributions from national parliaments. Results identified contributions from Germany, Greece, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. However, while Greece and Romania provided documents in English, the other national parliaments submitted opinions in their respective national languages. Consequently, due to language barriers, only the first two documents have been included in the analysis. Greece and Romania's opinion statements address Communications COM/2020/610, 611, 612, 613, and 614. Only Romania also considered COM/2020/609, which is central to this analysis. In other words, these opinion statements focus on communications related to the proposal of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and specifically discuss the Crisis and Force Majeure Regulation, the Asylum Procedures Regulation, and the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation.

ANALYSIS

In September 2020, the European Commission presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, a comprehensive legislative package aimed at reforming the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a political agreement on the document on December 20, 2023. The legislative acts composing the Pact were then approved by the European Parliament on April 10, 2024, and formally adopted in their final version on May 14, 2020.⁹³ These new EU laws came into force on June 11, 2024, and will become applicable in two years, on June 12, 2026.⁹⁴

The final version of the Pact comprises ten legislative instruments, accompanied by non-binding measures, all designed to establish a harmonized asylum system and uniform standards of protection for migrants, as imagined by the Tampere Program in 1999. In practical terms, the New Pact reforms the EU migration and asylum policy area by focusing on four pillars: "Secure external borders", "Fast and efficient procedures", "Effective system of solidarity and responsibility", and "Embedding migration in international partnerships".⁹⁵

While officially presented as a step towards a "fresh start" for EU migration policy, several observers argue that the Pact primarily reinforces existing control-oriented approaches. The analysis that follows examines whether the New Pact

⁹³ European Commission, *Pact on Migration and Asylum: A Common EU System to Manage Migration*. [Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu), Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, cit.

⁹⁴ European Commission, *Commission Presents the Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum* [press release], 12 June 2024..

⁹⁵ European Commission. *Questions and Answers: Explanatory Memo on the Pact on Migration and Asylum*, cit.

contributes to the continuing securitization of migration within the EU, analyzing its discourse and policy measures through the lens of securitization theory.

4. EXAMINING THE FIRST CONDITION: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This section will use textual analysis (the first phase of Fairclough's CDA) to assess whether the first condition for successful securitization has been met: "Speech acts in migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020". Concretely speaking, six public speeches of key representatives of the European Commission – Ursula von der Leyen, Margaritis Schinas, and Ylva Johansson – will be examined using some of the linguistic categories developed by Strauss and Feiz such as granularity of detail (vague or precise language), naming and wording choices, as well as adverbs and adjectives.⁹⁶ These speeches can only be labeled as security speech acts, and thus satisfy the first condition, if they present elements associated with securitization (e.g., threats, solutions, referent objects) and justify the need for a securitizing move. If this condition is not met, the analysis will still proceed to the second dimension of CDA, where the discourses identified through textual analysis will be examined to address the second condition of the article's securitization framework. Indeed, given the difficulties in determining when securitizing moves are justified by speech acts – since securitizing moves consist of ordinary policies that are continually implemented – it is assumed that securitizing moves can still occur even without them. In such cases, the outcome will be partial rather than complete securitization.

4.1 *The Identification of Threats*

The first recurring element identified during the textual analysis of the selected documents is the identification of a specific threat. As noted by the Copenhagen School and shared by this article, the process through which an issue is socially constructed as a threat is at the basis of the securitization process.⁹⁷ Therefore, recognizing that an issue is framed explicitly as a threat within a discourse is a clear sign that the speech under examination can be classified as a security speech act. To further strengthen this claim, it is also noted that without the identification of a clear threat, a speech cannot justify the adoption of a securitizing move.

During the period analyzed (December 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020), multiple issues and potential risks were recognized and addressed by Commission representatives Johansson, Schinas, and von der Leyen. For example, in her speech delivered on April 2, 2020,⁹⁸ Commissioner Johansson recognized rising

⁹⁶ S. Strauss and P. Feiz. *Discourse Analysis. Putting our Worlds into Words*, cit.

⁹⁷ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., p. 26.

⁹⁸ Full text available at Appendix B.

xenophobia as a potential problem in the area of migration and asylum policy. She characterized xenophobia as a problem emerging “in times of crisis” and affecting “the whole European Union”. Moreover, humanizing language was used to demonstrate that “migrants and refugees” were actively supporting their host society across Europe as “health care workers, doctors, providing services, or doing voluntary work”. In other words, the speech addressed the issue of xenophobia while illustrating its irrationality. Similarly, on December 16, 2019,⁹⁹ Vice President Schinas discussed issues related to online terrorism and organized crime, but without providing details.

Drawing on these initial findings, this paper has decided to focus on speeches delivered from September 23, 2020, onward. In fact, while the speeches delivered on December 16, 2019, and April 2, 2020, identify problems within migration and asylum, they do not explicitly categorize or address these issues as threats, but rather as potential risks. Differently, the four speeches delivered from September 23, 2020, clearly identify human smuggling and irregular migration as the main threats to be addressed in the area of migration and asylum policy. This difference in language – the first two speeches talked about “challenges” – makes it immediately evident that speeches delivered before September 23, 2020, have no chance of being considered security speech acts because, unlike the later speeches, they lack language reflecting a direct approach to urgently address the recognized issues. To illustrate this point, let’s now delve into the analysis of the four speeches made on and after September 23, 2020. Among the European Commission representatives considered, Commissioner Johansson provides the most in-depth discussions of the two threats. It is no coincidence that the speeches delivered on September 23, 2020,¹⁰⁰ and on November 30, 2020,¹⁰¹ are the most detailed among those examined. In these speeches, irregular migration and human smuggling are clearly identified as significant threats in the area of migration and asylum, with qualitative and quantitative details provided to underline their seriousness. For instance, in the September 23, 2020 speech, Johansson mentions that 120,000 illegal arrivals were recorded in the year 2019 and compares it to the 1.8 million arrivals during the 2015-2016 European migration crisis. This comparison highlights that, while the threat of irregular migration is not as urgent as in the past, it remains a persistent issue that needs to be addressed after almost 10 years. Similarly, in her November 30, 2020, speech, Johansson uses official figures to show that the number of irregular migrants in Europe might be higher than expected: “according to a Frontex report, 22 percent of those entering the Schengen area were not checked towards the Schengen Information System”. Moreover, human smuggling is described in the speeches using strong adjectives like “criminal” and “well-organized”, and expressions such as “earning a lot of

⁹⁹ Full text available at Appendix A.

¹⁰⁰ Full text available at Appendix C.

¹⁰¹ Full text available at Appendix F.

money by smuggling people into the European Union and at the same time a lot of people are risking their lives”.

Although less detailed, Vice-President Schinas’s speech on September 23, 2020,¹⁰² also recognizes human smuggling and irregular migration as primary threats that need to be addressed by the EU. For example, while irregular migration is only mentioned twice, with minimal use of adjectives, quantitative data, and technical terms – resulting in a low granularity of detail – the threat is still clearly identified. Similarly, human smuggling is described with the phrase: “smugglers continue to profit by exploiting migrants, endangering lives and selling false hope in blatant disregard for human dignity”. Also in this case, despite the lack of detail, the identification of the threat remains indisputable.

Although the speakers change, President Ursula von der Leyen also identifies the same threats as Schinas and Johansson in her speech given on November 19, 2020.¹⁰³ Once again, the speech mentions the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration but lacks the specificity found in Johansson’s discourses. The granularity of detail is low, and threats are only loosely described. For example, just a few adjectives are used, such as “ruthless” to describe human smugglers and “large” to refer to irregular migration inflows. Instead of providing an in-depth explanation of threats, this speech highlights the harmful effects of irregular migration and human smuggling by referring to two tragedies at the beginning of the statement. One involves a ship that sank along the coast of Libya, taking 74 people with it, while the other describes the efforts of Spanish authorities to rescue 110 refugees in the Mediterranean Sea.

In short, despite their different approaches, the fact that President von der Leyen, Vice-President Schinas, and Commissioner Johansson all identify the same threats indicates that all four speeches delivered since September 23, 2020, include the necessary element that any discourse must have to be considered a security speech act: the identification of a specific threat. This alignment suggests that the European Commission has intentionally constructed a narrative where irregular migration and human smuggling are seen as threats in the broader context of migration and asylum policy.

4.2 The Proposal of Corresponding Solutions

The textual analysis of public speeches reveals that the identification of threats is always followed by proposals for the adoption of policy instruments that the Commission, and by extension the EU as a collective security agent, should implement to address these threats. This pattern aligns perfectly with the securitization theory developed in this paper, establishing that the proposal of solutions is the second essential element required for a public speech to be classified as a security speech act. As outlined in the theoretical section of the

¹⁰² Full text available at Appendix D.

¹⁰³ Full text available at Appendix E.

paper, security speech acts are not always necessary for a securitizing move to occur. However, when the potential for such acts is real – as this analysis demonstrates – it is clear that the identification of threats should always be followed by proposals for the adoption of policy instruments that address them. As mentioned earlier with regards to the lack of clear threat identification, once again, speeches delivered before September 23, 2020, cannot be considered security speech acts due to their vague references to potential solutions. For instance, when Vice-President Schinas’s speech on December 16, 2019, identified the issues of online terrorism and organized crime, the proposed solutions were only vaguely presented. The speech referred to a “swift agreement on a Regulation to prevent terrorist content online”, and “targeted proposals for cybercrime. While adjectives are used to give the appearance of precision, there is little detail about what the proposals actually entail.

In contrast, speeches delivered on or after September 23, 2020, all identify the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling and are followed by the proposal to adopt specific measures. More precisely, each speech focusing on these threats always advocates for increased controls at the EU external borders and enhanced cooperation with third countries. These proposals are always tied to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, presented by the European Commission on September 23, 2020. Thus, in reality, the New Pact is the Commission’s solution to these threats. However, for the sake of clarity and to facilitate deeper analysis, the paper continues to refer to the specific measures mentioned, treating the New Pact as the implicit underlying basis. To demonstrate what has been said until now, let’s move to the analysis of the documents. For instance, Commissioner Johansson’s speech on September 23, 2020, clearly references increased controls at the EU external borders and enhanced cooperation with third countries. She highlights the need for “good readmission agreements with third countries” to repatriate those who do not have the right to remain in Europe. Moreover, she discusses the importance of strengthening the control at the EU external borders through a revised and extended version of Eurodac, a new solidarity mechanism, as well as the implementation of a “mandatory screening process”. More precisely, detailing the screening process, the speech does not only mention “security checks” and “health checks” but it also provides quantitative details specifying that the procedure “will take a maximum of five days”. Similarly, Commissioner Johansson highlights the importance of making fast decisions on returns, arguing that “it’s important that we can have a decision on returns very quickly – in twelve weeks”.

Following the same strategy, Vice-President Schinas’s speech on September 23, 2020, emphasizes the need to fight irregular migration and human smuggling through “strengthened partnerships with countries of origin and transit” and better “management of external borders”. In presenting such solutions, Schinas provides an even higher level of detail than Johansson, using precise adjectives, adverbs, and technical terms. For example, when discussing the need to collaborate more with third states, Schinas specifies that these agreements should

focus on areas such as “investment and trade [...] employment [...] education” and should extend “at all levels”, mentioning precise regions like “Northern Africa” and “Caribbean and Pacific states”, as well as international organizations like “the UN” and “the African Union”. Similarly, when addressing the “management of external borders”, Vice President Schinas explains in detail the solutions envisaged to strengthen border controls. He refers to the “new and mandatory screening at all borders of all arrivals”, where each individual will undergo “thorough security, health, and identity checks”. Then, he explains that “all those unlikely to get asylum will have to go through mandatory, fast-tracked border procedures [...] for efficiently processing returns”. Finally, he also mentions that Frontex will continue to play its role as an “operational arm”.

This consistent pattern is not only evident in the speeches of Johansson and Schinas but also reflected in President von der Leyen’s statement. In her November 19, 2020, discourse, von der Leyen proposes measures to combat the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling. She calls for “robust and fair” management of external borders, specifying actions such as developing “more efficient and faster” procedures and ensuring a “fair[er] sharing” of responsibility and solidarity among Member States. The proposal for “more efficient and faster procedures” is further detailed, specifying that it refers to the whole process of “pre-entry screening, asylum procedures and [...] returns”. Von der Leyen also highlights the importance of establishing “tailor-made and mutually beneficial” partnerships with third countries to better manage migration. She elaborates that these agreements will help “address [...] human trafficking, [...] develop legal pathways and [they] will tackle the effective implementation of readmission agreements”. In addition, these measures will “boost a common EU system for returns to make EU migration rules more effective and credible”. Everything considered, although von der Leyen’s speech may offer less granularity of detail compared to Johansson and Schinas, it is important to note that she also shares the approach of the Commission. In other words, she also believes that the threats of irregular migration and human trafficking can only be addressed through strengthened internal border controls and enhanced international partnerships.

In summary, this section confirms that the four speeches delivered on and after September 23, 2020, not only have intentionally framed irregular migration and human smuggling as significant threats, but they have also agreed that these issues can only be effectively addressed through the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and particularly through a combination of strengthened border controls and enhanced partnerships with third countries. The recurring themes of threats and solutions, along with the use of similar language in the four different speeches, clearly demonstrate the Commission’s commitment to initiate a securitization process in migration and asylum policy. This coherence reinforces the initial hypothesis that all four public statements delivered since September 23, 2020, can indeed be classified as security speech acts. However, the presence of the two elements of threat identification and proposal of solutions is not enough.

4.3 *Referent Objects of Security*

As recognized by various critical schools of thought focused on securitization theory, such as the Copenhagen School, any issue can be constructed as a threat by those who have the power to do so. However, such framing lacks credibility unless a specific referent object of security – something or someone in need of protection – is also identified. For this reason, the third and final element that this article considers essential for a public discourse to be classified as a security speech act is the presence of a clear referent object of security.

As in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, speeches delivered before September 23, 2020, are again excluded as potential security speech acts due to their lack of clearly defined threats, solutions, and referent objects. For example, in the speeches by Vice-President Schinas on December 16, 2019, and Commissioner Johansson on April 2, 2020, not only are threats and solutions vaguely described, but it is also complex to identify clear referent objects of security that would justify a securitizing move. In contrast, speeches delivered since September 23, 2020, prove that whenever the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration are mentioned, two referent objects of security, that the EU feels the responsibility to protect, are also identified. The identification of reference objects not only legitimizes the identified threats but also reinforces the credibility of the security measures proposed by the EU. Sometimes, these referent objects are migrants seeking international protection or better living conditions. Other times, the focus shifts to European citizens and, by extension, to European society as a whole. This double focus is evident in Commissioner Johansson's speech on September 23, 2020. In her discourse, irregular migration is identified as the main threat to European citizens, while human smuggling is framed as a threat to potential refugees and potential legal migrants. The distinction between those who should be tackled and those who should be protected is emphasized through the specific language used throughout the speech. Looking at the linguistic category of naming and wording choices, an explicit distinction is made between regular migrants, who have the "legal right to work or study in our Union", and refugees, who are "in need of international protection", versus irregular migrants, who "have no legal right to stay and must go back".

As mentioned earlier, the identification of reference objects not only legitimizes the perceived threats but also reinforces the credibility of the security measures proposed by the EU. It is no coincidence that when discussing the protection of European citizens from irregular migration, Johansson's speech consistently references the need to strengthen border controls and more efficient return procedures. Similarly, when potential refugees and legal migrants are framed as vulnerable individuals needing protection from the exploitation of human smugglers, the speech focuses on the need to improve the number of agreements with the countries of origin and departure of these migrants. Vice-President Schinas's speech on the same day presents a similar pattern, although with less detail. Although the phrase "smugglers continue to profit by exploiting migrants,

endangering lives and selling false hope in blatant disregard for human dignity” explicitly highlights the need to protect potential refugees and legal migrants from human smuggling, the link between irregular migration and the safety of European citizens is less explicitly drawn but still present. Also in this case, whenever referent objects of security are mentioned, explicit links are drawn with the policy instruments proposed to address the identified threats, so as to justify the need for their adoption. References to these two referent objects of security also appear in later speeches, such as von der Leyen’s on November 19, 2020, and Commissioner Johansson’s on November 30, 2020. In von der Leyen’s discourse, human smuggling poses a threat to potential refugees and legal migrants, exploiting their vulnerability and directing them into dangerous journeys to Europe. Conversely, irregular migration is framed as a threat to the stability of EU Member States, and, by extension, their populations. Similarly, although Johansson’s speech on November 30, 2020, does not mention the protection of migrants, the need to support European citizens is underlined. Indeed, her statement “our citizens overwhelmingly support free movement [...] They want to work, they want to spend, they want to travel. And they want to be safe” makes it clear that European citizens are the main referent to protect in relation to the threat posed by irregular migration.

Everything considered, this section shows that all the speeches delivered on and after September 23, 2020, present the three elements that this article considers necessary for a public discourse to be classified as a security speech act.

4.4 Additional Elements: Urgency/Efficiency and Division/Solidarity

Section 5.1 identifies three essential elements necessary for classifying a public statement as a security speech act: the identification of threats, the proposal of corresponding solutions, and the identification of referent objects of security. However, the textual analysis reveals additional factors that support the assumptions made earlier. Specifically, recurring references to efficiency, urgency, solidarity, and division are part of a strategy of the Commission to create a broader consensus around the identified threats and the proposed solutions. This reinforces the argument that all four speeches delivered on or after September 23, 2020, can be designated as security speech acts, thus fulfilling the first condition for successful securitization.

In all four discourses, references to urgency and efficiency are numerous and are mainly used to describe in more detail the solutions proposed to address the threats constructed by the European Commission. These references, conveyed through the use of adjectives, adverbs, or concrete deadlines, serve to the Commission to reinforce the perception that the threats of irregular immigration and human smuggling are urgent issues requiring immediate and effective responses. For instance, in Commissioner Johansson’s speeches on September 23, 2020, and November 30, 2020, the inclusion of precise deadlines consolidates the themes of efficiency and urgency. The first speech specifies “a maximum of five

days” to complete the mandatory screening process and “twelve weeks” for issuing decisions on return, while the speech delivered on November 30, 2020, highlights urgency by using deadlines such as “next week”, “in April”, and “in May”. This precision also suggests a commitment to efficiency. Furthermore, adjectives and adverbs such as “quickly” (used in the context of processing asylum claims), “mandatory” (regarding the screening procedure), and “effective” (concerning return decisions) further underline these themes.

This pattern is also evident in the words of President von der Leyen and Vice-President Schinas. For example, in Schinas’ speech on September 23, 2020, he frequently uses terms like “effective”, “strong”, “comprehensive”, and “robust” to convey a sense of efficiency when describing the proposed measures. He also employs general time references to communicate urgency, with phrases “the time for action is now” and “the clock has run out”. Similarly, von der Leyen in her speech on November 16, 2020, uses adverbs such as “efficiently”, “faster”, and “now” to convey both the effectiveness of these measures and the urgency of adopting them. The inclusion of specific deadlines (“next week”) and explicit expressions (“given the urgency of local situations”) further underline the need for prompt action.

References to the themes of solidarity and division also emerged during the textual analysis. Like urgency and efficiency, these references reinforce the argument that the four speeches delivered from September 23, 2020, onward can be identified as security speech acts. Indeed, continuous references to division and solidarity in the speeches serve to build a broader consensus among Member States (audience), around the threats and the solutions constructed by the European Commission. It is no coincidence that solidarity and division are often mentioned in the context of the relationship between the EU and its Member States, as well as among the Member States themselves.

Division and solidarity are closely intertwined: division typically emerges in discussions about the limitations of the current CEAS or the concerns and divisions of Member States, while solidarity is consistently presented as the solution to these problems. For instance, in von der Leyen’s speech on November 19, 2020, division is underlined when it is acknowledged that Italy, Greece, and Spain are struggling more than other Member States with the arrival of migrants to the EU external borders. While these divisive sentiments are emphasized at the beginning of the speech by pointing out the specific Member States facing greater challenges, after this moment the European Commission shifts to using more inclusive terminology that avoids directly naming geographic areas of concern. Using generic and vague terms such as “Member States”, and “we”, or employing adjectives like “mutually beneficial” and “fair”, the European Commission aims to convey an image of solidarity, seeking to bridge existing divisions so that the Member States all converge toward acceptance of the new measures it proposes.

Additional examples of this pattern emerge when looking at Vice-President Schinas’s speech on September 23, 2020. Here, references to division appear when the discourse reflects on past events before introducing the measures included in

the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Phrases like “Italy does not live migration in the same way as Greece. Nor does Germany live migration the same way as France. Nor Austria as Denmark” underscore a lack of unity among Member States, implying that some Member States are more impacted by migration issues than others. However, as the Commission attempts to build a consensus around the solutions proposed to combat irregular migration and human smuggling, Schinas abandons words related to division, opting instead for more neutral and generic terms such as “Member States” and “we” (used approximately 50 times), or expressions like “they all deserve to be recognized, acknowledged, and addressed”.

In short, this section demonstrates that the European Commission uses references to urgency and efficiency to strengthen the perception that irregular migration and human smuggling are pressing threats that require immediate and effective solutions. Similarly, references to division and solidarity reveal an intentional strategy by the Commission to stimulate greater consensus among Member States on its proposed measures, i.e., on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Together, these four elements – urgency, efficiency, division, and solidarity – reinforce the arguments about threats and solutions, definitely clarifying which speeches among the six analyzed can be classified as security speech acts.

4.5 Results

Table 1. Summary of the textual analysis of the six public speeches
(Source: personal elaboration, 18/08/2024)

	Threat (referent objects of security)	Proposed solution	Efficiency/ Urgency	Solidarity /Division
Schinas. 16/12/2019	A) Smugglers and traffickers; B) Terrorism, organized crime, and cybercrime.	A) Strengthened external borders; a more effective return system; enhanced asylum procedures; more legal migration pathways. B) Regulation to prevent terrorist content online; proposals for cybercrime.	Few references to urgency. Many references to efficiency.	Few references to division. Many references to solidarity.
Johansson. 02/04/2020	A) Humanitarian crisis, refugee camps. (vulnerable immigrants); B) Rising xenophobia (European citizens).	A) Relocating vulnerable people; sending medical equipment; financial support; travel restrictions. B) Grant access to welfare and healthcare; implementation of WHO recommendations.	Yes, but only in relation to threat A.	Few references to division. Many references to solidarity.

Johansson. 23/09/2020	A) Irregular migration (European citizens); B) Human smuggling (potential refugees and legal migrants).	Cooperation with third countries; monitoring mechanism; new Eurodac; screening process; border procedure; new solidarity mechanism.	Yes	Only one reference to division. Many references to solidarity.
Schinus. 23/09/2020	A) Human smuggling (potential refugees and legal migrants); B) Irregular migration (European stability).	Strengthened partnerships with third countries; mandatory screening at all borders; border procedures; new solidarity mechanism; new crisis instrument.	Yes	References to division and solidarity with similar intensities.
von der Leyen. 19/11/2020	A) Human smuggling (potential refugees and legal migrants); B) Irregular migration (European stability and European citizens).	Strengthened external borders through mandatory screenings and asylum procedures; balanced responsibility-solidarity relationship; cooperation with third countries; more legal migration pathways.	Yes	Balanced references between solidarity and division.
Johansson. 30/11/2020	A) Economic crisis; B) Irregular migration; C) Crime and terrorism (European citizens).	Absence of internal border controls (i.e., a functioning Schengen); strengthened external borders through closer police work, security cooperation, screenings and border procedure.	Yes	Only references to solidarity are present.

The analysis conducted in this chapter reveals that four out of six speeches delivered by key representatives of the European Commission can be classified as security speech acts, thereby fulfilling the first condition for successful securitization defined at the beginning of the chapter. More precisely, the speeches identified as security speech acts are those delivered from September 23, 2020, onwards. This classification is based on three elements: the identification of specific threats, the 57 proposals of corresponding solutions, and the designation of referent objects of security to be protected. These elements are further reinforced by references to efficiency, urgency, solidarity, and division.

Concretely speaking, in the four speeches, the European Commission emphasizes two main threats in the area of migration and asylum: human smuggling and irregular migration. The proposed solution to address these issues is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, particularly a combination of strengthened border controls and enhanced partnerships with third countries. Delving into cooperation with third countries, the most frequently cited measure is the conclusion of international partnerships. Differently, when the focus shifts to strengthening the EU external border controls, the Commission mentions various measures like mandatory screening at borders, faster asylum procedures, enhanced cooperation between law enforcement, and new solidarity mechanisms. The third key element is the identification of referent objects of security. As

previously mentioned, whenever the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration are mentioned, the speeches always identify two referent objects of security. Sometimes migrants seeking international protection or better living conditions are presented as those in need of protection. Other times, the focus shifts to European citizens and, by extension, to European society as a whole. This dual reference not only concretizes the identified threats but also reinforces and legitimizes the EU proposed measures. Although not essential, references to efficiency, urgency, division, and solidarity have helped in the arguments about threats and solutions, definitely clarifying which speeches can be classified as security speech acts within the context of migration and asylum policy.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that the speeches delivered by President von der Leyen, Vice-President Schinas, and Commissioner Johansson since September 23, 2020, are purposefully constructed by the European Commission as security speech acts. These speeches convey a clear and coherent narrative that lays the groundwork for the Commission to launch a securitizing move in the area of migration and asylum policy.

5. EXAMINING THE SECOND CONDITION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Section 6 focuses on discourse analysis, which corresponds to the second phase of CDA. Here, the goal is to determine whether the second condition is fulfilled: “The Communication 2020/609 of the European Commission, which proposes the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, can be identified as a securitizing move in the EU migration and asylum policy area”. A positive response will only be given if the discourses and narratives emerging from the four security speech acts identified in Chapter 3 align with those identified in Communication 2020/609.

In this paper, “discourse” refers to the elements and themes identified through textual analysis, while “narrative” describes the specific ways in which these discourses are articulated and framed in texts, reflecting the strategies used by different actors to assert power and achieve particular. Essentially, “discourse analysis” in this article involves comparing the discourses that emerged from the previous textual analyses of the documents, as well as comparing the narratives that arise across different texts. Therefore, before conducting a comprehensive discourse analysis, it was necessary to develop a textual analysis of each document under consideration. While this has already been done for the security speech acts, a preliminary textual analysis of Communication 2020/609 must also be conducted. For the sake of clarity and to avoid overwhelming the discussion, the results of the textual analysis of COM/2020/609 will not be presented as was done for the security speech acts in Section 5. Instead, a summary table of these findings will be provided in Section 6.4, before discussing the results of the discourse analysis. The relevant insights from this textual analysis will be incorporated directly into the discourse analysis when comparing COM/2020/609 with the security speech acts.

To recognize the discourses and narratives emerging in the analyzed documents, understand how they relate to each other, and explore their implications, the article employs the techniques of intertextuality and interdiscursivity developed by Fairclough. Intertextuality refers to how a text relates to other texts. High intertextuality describes heterogeneity between texts and, consequently, between discourses. Differently, low levels of intertextuality coincide with similar discourses and greater acceptance of a discourse. Interdiscursivity examines how texts are organized according to conventions and how they construct various narratives (Fairclough, 1995: 8-10). Although the term interdiscursivity will not be explicitly mentioned during the discourse analysis, it will be implicitly referenced whenever a specific narrative is identified and discussed. These techniques will be applied considering that the analysis is guided by the following questions: Are there discourses related to threats and solutions? Do the discourses address themes like efficiency, urgency, solidarity, and division? What narratives are conveyed through certain discourses? Are there consistent narratives across all the analyzed documents?

5.1 Discourses and Narratives on Threats and Referent Objects of Security

When examining the four security speech acts, discourse analysis immediately identifies a discourse on threats and one on referent objects of security. As already demonstrated in Section 5 with the textual analysis, these documents consistently highlight two primary threats: human smuggling and irregular migration. Whenever these threats are mentioned, the speech acts also identify two referent objects of security. Sometimes migrants seeking international protection or better living conditions are presented as those in need of protection. Other times, the focus shifts to European citizens and, by extension, to European society as a whole. These findings align with the analysis of scholar Lorenzo Gabrielli, which identifies two dominant narratives that the European Union has used over time to securitize migration¹⁰⁴. The first is a humanitarian narrative, which focuses on the need to protect migrants from smugglers and irregular migration. The second is a utilitarian narrative, which frames illegal migration as a threat to national security and societal safety.¹⁰⁵

A discourse on threats is also evident in the European Commission's Communication 2020/609. More precisely, the preliminary textual analysis conducted on the document reveals that, like the security speech acts, irregular migration and human smuggling are framed as the main threats that the EU must address. This is clear in the use of various synonyms such as "unauthorized movements", "illegal border crossings", or even "irregular routes" to describe

¹⁰⁴ L. Gabrielli, "Securitization of Migration and Human Rights: Frictions at the Southern EU Borders and Beyond", *URBAN PEOPLE / LIDÉ MĚSTA*, 2014, 16(2) in S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission's Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit.

¹⁰⁵ Ivi, 314

irregular migration, each adding nuances by placing the phenomenon in different contexts.¹⁰⁶ In addition, terms like “increased complexity”, “dangerous”, and “great risk” are used to explicitly frame this problem as hazardous. The Commission further specifies the threat by providing concrete data, such as the statement recognizing that only “about a third of people ordered to return from [the] Member States actually leave”, suggesting that irregular migration is partly driven by the current structure of the CEAS. When discussing human smuggling, Communication 2020/609 uses even more precise adjectives and expressions, describing it as an activity that “involves the organized exploitation of migrants, showing scant respect for human life in the pursuit of profit” and observing its prevalence “along migration routes”. Human smugglers are portrayed as “criminal networks” that exploit and endanger migrants for personal gain (COM/2020/609: 15). The Communication concludes by acknowledging human smuggling as a “common challenge” that must be addressed because it impacts various areas, including finance and the digital world.¹⁰⁷ This excerpt of textual analysis of COM/2020/609 was reported to demonstrate a high degree of homogeneity (indicating a low level of intertextuality) between the discourse on threats of the security acts and the Commission’s Communication.

However, while the discourse on threats is conveyed identically from the security speech acts to Communication 2020/609, differences emerge when it comes to the discourse on referent objects of security. Unlike the security speech acts, which balance the protection of both migrants and European citizens, the Commission in Communication 2020/609 justifies its measures exclusively through a humanitarian narrative. It emphasizes the need to protect potential refugees or those seeking better living conditions without referencing a utilitarian narrative and the protection of European citizens. For example, when in Communication 2020/609 the Commission states that “protection [...] could also be immediately granted to [...] people who face an exceptionally high risk of indiscriminate violence due to armed conflict in their country of origin”, it explicitly recognizes that the primary goal in this context is the protection of migrants, particularly refugees (COM/2020/609: 11). The focus on potential refugees and legal migrants as referent objects of security emerge again when the document highlights the need to combat human smuggling to protect migrant women, who are particularly at risk of “becoming victims of trafficking, for sexual exploitation or other forms of gender-based violence”. Similarly, migrant children are identified as particularly “vulnerable” and in need of protection” (*Ivi*: 7). Thus, if both humanitarian and utilitarian narratives were present in the security speech acts, some might argue that Communication 2020/609 cannot be considered a securitizing move because it only partially reflects the discourse on referent objects of security and emphasizes just the humanitarian narrative. However, this critique does not diminish the document’s role as a securitizing move. Even if it focuses on

¹⁰⁶ *Ivi*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ivi*, p. 16.

just one referent object, the underlying discourse on referent objects of security – that the EU must protect a specific subject from specific threats – remains valid. Moreover, as pointed out by Nissander the presence of only one referent object of security in Communication 2020/609 can actually be seen as further evidence that the document is a securitizing move.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the Commission intentionally chose to emphasize the humanitarian narrative because it understood that this approach would increase its legitimacy and more effectively justify the proposed security measures during negotiations with Member States.

In conclusion, although with different intensities, this first section shows that Communication 2020/609 presents the same discourses (threats and referent objects) and the same humanitarian narrative as the security speech acts.

5.2 Discourses and Narratives on Corresponding Solutions

A discourse on solutions to address the identified threats emerged clearly when examining the four security speech acts. As already discussed in Section 5 with the textual analysis, each of these speech acts is proposed to address the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration by increasing controls at the EU external borders and enhancing cooperation with third countries. When focusing on this latter, the consistent proposal that emerged was the need to conclude more international partnerships in several areas, including security and migration. When the focus shifted to the EU external border controls, the Commission mentioned mandatory screening at borders, faster asylum procedures, enhanced cooperation between law enforcement, and new solidarity mechanisms.

The discourse analysis reveals that Communication 2020/609 also adopts the same discourse on solutions, advocating for strengthening the EU external borders and enhancing cooperation with third countries. More precisely, the textual analysis conducted on Communication 2020/609 reveals that the document offers a much higher degree of detail compared to the security speech acts. In the first part of the document (Sections 2 to 5), specific measures aimed at strengthening external borders are outlined, focusing on proposals like mandatory pre-entry screenings, new border procedures, a common system for returns, new solidarity mechanisms, and a new European Border and Coast Guard. Each of these measures is articulated using technical language to enhance clarity and detail. For example, the document specifies that screening includes “identification, health and security checks, fingerprinting and registration in the Eurodac database” (COM/2020/609: 4). Similarly, the asylum border procedure is not only described but is also detailed extensively, clarifying the conditions that determine whether a person is placed under a border or a standard asylum procedure. The use of technical terms is complemented by adjectives and adverbs, such as “swiftly”, “clear”, “fair”, and “flexible”, further increasing the precision and detail of the

¹⁰⁸ S. Nissander, *Pushing the Border Outwards. A Critical Discourse Analysis of the European Commission’s Securitisation of Migration and the Right to Asylum*, cit., 50.

proposed solutions. The second part of the Communication (Chapters 6-8) highlights measures aimed at combating irregular migration and human smuggling through strengthened partnerships with third countries. These agreements are described as “essential at all levels: bilateral, regional and multilateral”, with specific regions (“Northern Africa”, “Western Balkans”, “Latin America”), international organizations (“the UN”, “the African Union”), and individual States (“Turkey”, “Lebanon”) mentioned (COM/2020/609: 18). Furthermore, these partnerships aim to enhance the capacity of partner countries to “manage irregular migration, forced displacement and combat smuggling networks” through tools such as “strategic communication”, “reinforcing search and rescue capacities”, and “facilitating voluntary returns” (Ivi: 20). Finally, Communication 2020/609 emphasizes that these partnerships aim to strengthen the systems of returns, readmission, and reintegration, while also promoting legal migration and the integration of migrants.

Comparing the presentation of the discourse on solutions in Communication 2020/609 with its treatment in the security speech acts from Section 5, it becomes clear that the same dynamics have been transmitted without change from the speech acts to Communication 2020/609. This consistency indicates a low level of intertextuality and reinforces the idea that Communication 2020/609 is a securitizing move initiated by the European Commission on behalf of the EU as a collective security actor. Moreover, the greater depth and clarity in Communication 2020/609 compared to the speech acts suggests that the document serves as a concretization of the securitization process envisaged by the European Commission in those speech acts, further reinforcing the fact that COM/2020/609 is indeed a securitizing move.

Turning to emerging narratives, the discourse analysis builds on Nissander’s research (2021: 49-50) to show that in security speech acts, the European Commission frames the EU as an active and predominant player when discussing the solution of cooperation with third states. This is evident in statements such as “to support these partnerships, the EU and our Member States will systematically coordinate and bring together a wide range of policy and financing tools” (Schinas, 2020),¹⁰⁹ and “the European Union will [...] work towards tailor-made [...] partnerships” (von der Leyen, 2020).¹¹⁰ This narrative was also researched in Communication 2020/609 to examine intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The findings demonstrate that similar language conveying the same image of the EU is evident here as well. Indeed, phrases like “the EU will strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit to prevent dangerous journeys and irregular crossings” (COM/2020/609: 14), and “the EU will use these policies wherever relevant in the engagement with partner countries” (Ivi: 20) reflect the consistency of this narrative across documents. The combination of the humanitarian narrative and the narrative framing the EU as a leading and proactive player in

¹⁰⁹ Appendix D.

¹¹⁰ Appendix E.

Communication 2020/609 creates a scenario where the Commission supports increased border security and encourages third countries to take a more active role in managing migration. In other words, the Commission's use of a proactive language, alongside the humanitarian narrative, appears to serve as an intentional strategy to justify its restrictive policies and build consensus for the securitization of migration and asylum.

In summary, Section 5.2 shows that Communication 2020/609 reflects the same discourse and narrative on solutions as the security speech acts. This consistency confirms a high degree of homogeneity among the texts (indicating a low level of intertextuality) and reinforces the argument that Communication 2020/609 represents the securitizing move initiated by the European Commission, as described by the second condition for successful securitization.

5.3 Discourses and Narratives on Efficiency/Urgency and Division/Solidarity

The discourse analysis identified two additional discourses within the four security speech acts: one focused on urgency and efficiency, and another on division and solidarity.

Beginning with the discourse on efficiency and urgency, the textual analysis in Section 5 showed that this discourse was intentionally included in the speeches to highlight the need to implement the proposed measures in the shortest possible time due to the pressing nature of the identified threats.

This same discourse, with the same objective, was also found in the Commission's Communication 2020/609, demonstrating a high level of homogeneity across the texts, which in turn suggests a low level of intertextuality. More precisely, the textual analysis conducted on Communication 2020/609 shows that efficiency is emphasized through the use of adjectives, adverbs, and specific expressions. Adjectives such as "fair", "efficient", "innovative", and "tailor-made" are examples the Commission uses when introducing and explaining every new measure. Urgency is also highlighted, particularly using specific deadlines, such as the one that calls for reaching a political agreement on the principles at the basis of the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation by the end of 2020.¹¹¹ Similarly, the document requires the adoption of the Screening Regulation and the revised Asylum Procedures Regulation "by June 2021",¹¹² and the implementation and interoperability of all large-scale IT systems "by the end of 2023".¹¹³ While references to urgency are well present when discussing the strengthening of the EU external borders, they are completely

¹¹¹ The Asylum and Migration Management Regulation was officially proposed through Communication 2020/610 on September 23, 2020.

¹¹² The Screening Regulation was officially proposed through Communication 2020/612 on September 23, 2020. The revised Asylum Procedures Regulation was officially proposed through Communication 2020/611 on September 23, 2020.

¹¹³ *Ivi*, pp. 10-12.

absent in the section on partnerships with third countries. Therefore, some might argue that the absence of references to urgency in the second part of Communication 2020/609 challenges the classification of the document as a securitizing move. However, the consistent emphasis on efficiency throughout the document, combined with the references to urgency in the first part, suggests that the overall discourse on urgency and efficiency is intact and has been transmitted from the speech acts to Communication 2020/609. This consistency reinforces the argument that Communication 2020/609 can indeed be considered a securitizing move.

As noted at the beginning of this Section, the discourse analysis of the security speech acts also identified a discourse on solidarity and division. Similar to the discourse on efficiency and urgency, this discourse was constructed by the European Commission to support the need to implement the measures proposed to address the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling. More precisely, textual analysis of the speech acts showed that references to division were used to highlight the limitations of the current CEAS and the concerns of Member States, while references to solidarity were then introduced to present solutions to these issues.

This same discourse, employed with the same objective, is reflected in Communication 2020/609, thus adding an additional reason to consider this document as a securitizing move. For instance, the proposal for a new solidarity mechanism reflects this approach. This measure acknowledges “the different challenges created by different geographical locations”, yet the mechanisms at its foundation ensure that “all [Member States] contribute through solidarity” through “a safety net [that] will ensure that the pressure on a Member State is effectively alleviated by relocation or return sponsorship”.¹¹⁴ The same logic of division and solidarity extends to the section of the Communication dedicated to strengthened partnerships with third countries. For example, it is noted that “both the EU and its partners have their own interests and tools to act”. However, it is immediately underlined that “comprehensive, balanced and tailor-made partnerships, can deliver mutual benefits” in areas such as economic, educational, migration, and security¹¹⁵.

Combining the discourses on efficiency/urgency and solidarity/division reveals a new narrative from the Commission, but let’s proceed in order. Textual analyses of all the documents show that references to efficiency and urgency are used to emphasize the need for swift implementation of the proposed measures due to the pressing nature of the identified threats. Similarly, references to solidarity and division highlight the limitations of the current CEAS and the concerns of Member States, before emphasizing the importance of the measures envisaged to solve these issues. Seen together, these two discourses function as tools for the Commission to build consensus among Member States on the identified threats

¹¹⁴ COM/2020/609: 5-6.

¹¹⁵ *Ivi*, 17.

and proposed solutions in view of the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact. In other words, these discourses create a narrative showing that the EU's real objective is to push for the mere adoption of its proposed measures. Although this may seem at odds with the humanitarian narrative, they are all part of a broad strategy by the European Commission that aims to adopt the New Pact to securitize the area of migration and asylum. However, to evaluate the success or failure of this strategy, the third condition must be examined first.

To summarize, this section demonstrates that also the last two identified discourses – efficiency/urgency and solidarity/division – along with their corresponding narrative, have been perfectly transferred from the speech acts to Communication 2020/609. Potential criticisms have been addressed, and this leaves no further obstacles to answering the second condition for successful securitization.

5.4 Results

Table 2. Summary of the textual analysis of the Communication 2020/609
(Source: personal elaboration, 27/08/2024)

	Threat (referent objects of security)	Proposed solution	Efficiency /Urgency	Solidarity /Division
COM/2020/609	A) Irregular migration. (Potential refugees and legal migrants); B) Human smuggling. (Potential refugees and legal migrants).	Strengthened external borders through pre-entry screenings, new border procedures, new solidarity mechanisms, a common EU system for returns, new European Border and Coast Guard; Cooperation with third countries through more international partnerships in different areas.	A) References to efficiency are used to describe both measures for strengthening external borders and measures for improving partnerships with third countries; B) References to urgency are only applied to describe measures for enhancing partnerships with third countries.	Balanced references between solidarity and division. Every time the text acknowledges divisions, it eventually suggests that solidarity is the key to resolving these issues.

The discourse analysis, through the lenses of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, demonstrates that all the discourses and narratives identified in the security speech acts are also present, although sometimes with different intensities, in the European Commission's Communication 2020/609. This confirms that this latter serves as a concretization of the securitization process envisaged by the European Commission in its speech acts. In other words, Communication 2020/609 can definitely be identified as the securitizing move proposing the New Pact on Migration and Asylum as the measure needed to address irregular migration and human smuggling, thereby attempting to securitize the EU migration and asylum policy area. Essentially, this observation allows the paper to confirm the fulfillment of the second condition for successful securitization.

To summarize, the security speech acts in Section 5 identified irregular migration and human smuggling as threats to be addressed urgently. These statements empowered and justified the European Commission, acting in the name of the European Union as a collective security actor, to initiate a securitizing move, identified in Communication 2020/609. This document, by proposing the

New Pact on Migration and Asylum – and related proposals for strengthening the EU external borders and enhancing cooperation with third countries – seeks to securitize the EU migration and asylum policy area to combat human smuggling and irregular migration.

One might argue that the identification of Communication 2020/609 as a securitizing move is simply a result of the fact that both security speech acts and Communication 2020/609 are products of the same institution, the European Commission. Hence, it should be natural that the analyzed documents share the same discourses and narratives. While this is a valid critique, it is important to recognize that this article identifies the European Commission as the only institution capable of acting on behalf of the EU as a collective security actor. Therefore, it is the sole body with the authority to identify threats and initiate the securitization of specific areas in response. Moreover, while various actors (e.g., Member States, civil society, etc.) can raise awareness of a threat, the European Commission is the only one that must eventually acknowledge and address it through securitizing moves. It follows that, within the European context being analyzed, it is impossible to envision any authority other than the Commission producing security speech acts and initiating securitization.

In conclusion, drawing on the securitization theory developed in this paper, it is not yet possible to assert that the European Union, through the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, has fully securitized the EU migration and asylum policy area. At this stage, the discussion is still focused on the proposal stage. To comprehensively answer the research question while remaining coherent with the theoretical framework and the methodology adopted, the next step is to examine the third dimension of CDA, i.e., the role of the audience in the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact.

6. EXAMINING THE THIRD CONDITION: AN INTEGRATED SOCIAL ANALYSIS

The social analysis aims to address the third condition for successful securitization by examining and interpreting Communication 2020/609 and the national opinion statements from Greece and Romania. This analysis seeks to reveal the power dynamics at play between the collective security actor (the EU, represented by the Commission) and the audience (the Member States) within the broader context of negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

However, it emerged that the social analysis lacks the necessary elements to fully examine the third condition: “The audience eventually accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances”. In fact, while the analysis can explore the negotiation phase of the Pact, it cannot determine whether these negotiations resulted in the actual adoption of the document. In other words, the social analysis alone cannot examine whether the European Commission’s securitizing move was accepted by the audience. Consequently, it cannot either examine whether the audience succeeded in influencing the final

version of the Pact. For these reasons, this Section will first present the findings of the social analysis. After that, they will be complemented with a comparative study conducted between the requests in national parliament opinion statements and the final legislative acts composing the New Pact. This combined approach forms what can be called an “integrated social analysis”.

To ensure compatibility with CDA principles, this analysis will draw on Fairclough’s theory of “power in discourse” from *Language and Power*¹¹⁶, as well as Chaffee’s research on the New Pact negotiations¹¹⁷. Furthermore, the following questions will help navigate these dynamics: which are the emerging power dynamics? Have the Member States tried to alter the Commission’s proposals under the New Pact? Has the Commission exercised its authority to keep its original proposals? What is the final result?

6.1 Social Analysis and Audience Requests

Social analysis typically uncovers power dynamics by drawing on the discourses and narratives previously discussed through discourse analysis. However, since the national parliament opinion statements are introduced here for the first time, CDA would normally require textual and discourse analyses before conducting social analysis on these texts. Yet, due to the brevity of these documents, it was possible to bypass these steps, as power dynamics were evident regardless. In contrast, identifying the power dynamics in the Commission’s Communication 2020/609 was straightforward thanks to the earlier discussed textual and discourse analyses.

Given this clarification, it is now possible to discuss the results of the social analysis. Beginning with the role of the European Commission, as Chaffe¹¹⁸ highlights, the high degree of power of this EU institution is demonstrated by the adoption of Communication 2020/609 itself. As the executive body of the EU, the main role of the Commission is to propose laws and non-binding policy instruments for implementation by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. As a consequence, the simple production of an announcement framing the New Pact on Migration and Asylum as a solution to irregular migration and human smuggling reflects a position of power of the Commission in negotiations. Indeed, given its responsibilities under the European Treaties, the Commission is the only institution able to identify and problematize key issues in migration and asylum policy and to decide the scope of what can be debated and proposed¹¹⁹. This idea is supported by Fairclough in *Language and Power*¹²⁰. He explains that power on a

¹¹⁶ N. Fairclough, *Language and power* (1st edition), cit.

¹¹⁷ I. Chaffee, *An Internal “Press”-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁰ N. Fairclough, *Language and power* (1st edition), cit.

societal level is held by those who control “orders of discourse” and can ideologically harmonize discourses within texts according to their own intentions¹²¹. The most obvious sign of the Commission’s ideological harmonization (power) in the texts analyzed is the lack of precision when describing proposed solutions or addressing differences between Member States. By remaining vague and using broad language to describe threats and solutions, the Commission allows itself to have wider margins to show that the final outcomes of the New Pact negotiations closely align with the initial proposal contained in Communication 2020/609. As Chaffee notes (this strategic use of power ensures that no initial commitment by the Commission is overly ambitious and risks failure¹²²). To sum up, the Commission holds much power in the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact, and this power is mainly aimed at protecting the institution’s legitimacy and the trust of EU Member States. Consequently, the final version of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum is likely to be very similar to the Commission’s original proposal, leaving little space for Member States (the audience) to push for changes.

Power is viewed differently from the perspective of Member States, given their concerns for preserving national sovereignty and limited resources compared to the EU. This may explain the discourse of frustration produced by Greece, which opposes the Commission’s effort of ideological harmonization. While the Greek opinion statement initially acknowledges that the European Commission’s proposed measures respect the principle of solidarity, it then goes into detail about some of the procedures and adjustments that the EU might make to address the unequal responsibilities between Member States inherent in current policies¹²³. For example, Greece calls for the revision of the proposed pre-entry screening process for third-country nationals who have already crossed the EU external borders but, based on a legal fiction, are considered not to have entered Member State territory. Moreover, the opinion statement suggests that the criteria for the allocation of solidarity contributions among Member States should include an additional factor: alongside population size (50 percent weight) and total GDP (50 percent weight), Greece argues that a State’s aggregate territorial area should be considered.

Greece’s discourse of frustration also emerges through the language used in its document, which clearly contrasts with that of the Communication 2020/609. As mentioned earlier, the Commission tends to use broad and neutral terms like “Member State” to avoid emphasizing differences between countries and encourage a broader consensus on its proposed measures. In contrast, Greece intentionally avoids such general terms, opting instead to refer specifically to “first-entry Member States” to emphasize the excessive burdens faced by countries

¹²¹ Ivi, p. 30.

¹²² I. Chaffee, *An Internal “Press”-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit., p. 30.

¹²³ Ivi, p. 45.

that serve as entry points into the EU. Moreover, as the most powerful and respected actor in the negotiations, the Commission in Communication 2020/609 advocates compliance with international law and protection for potential refugees and legal migrants. Greece, again, challenges the Commission's narrative by providing concrete examples of the inefficiencies of the proposed policies and the disproportionate burden that "first entry member states" must bear, implicitly drawing attention to its own national situation. In light of what has been said so far, Greece's opposition to the Commission's authority might suggest that the country holds significant power in the negotiations for the New Pact. Indeed, the Greek opinion statement also seeks to leverage its position as a first country of entry. However, historically, Greece does not hold the same level of influence as countries such as France and Germany, which instead have always had a decision-making role in Europe. Therefore, the strategy used by Greece in its opinion statement is not well-justified and does little to increase its negotiating power. In fact, it is believed that complete opposition to the Commission's approach would only be fruitful if a large part of Member States with similar interests supported this position during the negotiations. Yet, as has been clear since the 2015 crisis, this stance is usually supported only by the MED 5, as demonstrated by the 2018 position paper of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain on the revision of the Dublin Regulation.

Differently, the rhetoric used by Romania is more conciliatory and less accusatory than Greece's. The Romanian opinion statement does not mention distinctions like "first-entry Member States" and instead follows the Commission using general terms, such as "Member States", to address objective situations of difficulties that could potentially affect any country. Moreover, the language used is positive and not critical to the Commission, as demonstrated by the phrase "recommends that the European Legislator takes into account the following comments". However, like Greece, Romania does raise requests for clarification to the Commission regarding certain legislative proposals. First, it states that basing solidarity contributions on population size and GDP comes at the expense of Member States, like Romania itself, that "although having a large population or high gross domestic product, have a low history of asylum applications and by therefore, limited capacity to manage asylum applications, which could lead to national imbalances". Second, the Romanian Senate calls for the introduction of a transition period and European funding to build the necessary capacities for implementing the mandatory border procedure.

Everything considered, Romania's highly empathetic discourse, which aligns with the Commission and the EU concepts of solidarity and international cooperation, reflects its limited power in both European politics and the New Pact negotiations. Indeed, power in discourse typically manifests by directly recognizing and rejecting other Members' demands and interests¹²⁴. While Greece showed some of this in its opinion statement, it is completely absent in Romania's

¹²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 43.

document. Therefore, in light of the findings of the social analysis, it can be argued that none of the two countries holds strong negotiating power, but Romania probably has even less influence than Greece. It is for this reason that, unlike Greece, which openly challenges European institutions, Romania presents its demands by proposing a narrative that is open to dialogue and collaboration.

6.2 Audience Impact on the Final Version of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

The social analysis confirmed the assumption made in the theoretical framework that the audience, represented by EU Member States, plays a pivotal role in the securitization process when the securitizing actor is an international organization. It has been shown that the audience is not merely a passive recipient of the securitizing move, but it actively engages in negotiations with the collective security actor (the EU institutions) to reach compromises that improve its condition. Of course, the most important task of the audience is to accept or reject the securitizing move, which this paper identified as Communication 2020/609. It introduced the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, along with proposals for strengthening the EU external borders and enhanced cooperation with third countries, as a response to the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling. Essentially, the New Pact attempted to securitize the EU migration and asylum policy area.

The negotiation phase resulted in the adoption of the New Pact. Specifically, this document and its legislative proposals were approved by the European Parliament on April 10, 2024, and formally adopted by the Council on May 14, 2024¹²⁵. These new EU laws came into force on June 11, 2024, and will become fully applicable by June 12, 2026, except for the EU Framework Regulation on Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission, which is already in force¹²⁶.

However, as mentioned at the beginning of Section 7, neither social analysis nor proving that the audience ultimately accepted the securitizing move is sufficient to fully meet the third condition for successful securitization and respond to the research question. To claim that “the audience eventually accepted the securitization move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances”, it is essential to examine whether the demands made in national parliamentary opinion statements were incorporated by EU institutions into the final legislative acts of the New Pact.

As previously mentioned, both Romania and Greece expressed concerns about the solidarity relocation quotas. Specifically, Greece proposed that the criteria for the allocation of solidarity contributions among Member States should include not only population size (50 percent weight) and total GDP (50 percent weight), but

¹²⁵ European Commission, *Pact on Migration and Asylum: A Common EU System to Manage Migration*. [Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu), Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, cit.

¹²⁶ European Commission, *Commission presents the Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum* [Press release], 12 June 2024.

also the element of a state's aggregate territorial area. Similarly, Romania, without specifying a concrete solution, requested a revision of the population size and GDP criteria, arguing that these could potentially damage countries that, despite having a large population – Romania is the sixth most populous country in the EU according to Eurostat¹²⁷ – have limited capacity to manage asylum applications. However, a review of the final legislative act that includes this provision – the Asylum Migration Management Regulation (2024/1351/EU [AMMR])¹²⁸ – reveals that the European institutions did not adopt Greece's or Romania's suggestions. Instead, the Regulation maintained the original formulation proposed by the Commission, reflecting the power imbalances in the negotiation process noted in the last section. Article 66 of the AMMR confirms this: "The share of solidarity contributions to be provided by each Member State referred to in Article 57(3) shall be calculated following the formula set out in Annex I and shall be based on the following criteria for each Member State, according to the latest available Eurostat data: (a) the size of the population (50 % weighting); (b) the total GDP (50 % weighting)". Romania also asked for a transition period and European funding to develop the necessary capacities for implementing the mandatory border procedure. The Asylum Procedures Regulation (2024/1348/EU [APR]), which regulates asylum procedures, is the legislative act that addresses this issue¹²⁹. However, a review of Chapter III, Section IV of the Regulation – focused on special procedures, and thus including border procedure – reveals that no changes reflecting Romania's request were approved. As a result, while the audience accepted the securitizing move, the power imbalances in favor of the Commission once again led to the audience's will being ignored.

6.3 Results

The social analysis of Communication 2020/609 and the national parliament opinion statements of Greece and Romania partially responded to the third condition for successful securitization by revealing the power dynamics at play during the negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and its related measures. Specifically, it emerged that the European Commission held the most power, given its role as the executive arm of the EU recognized by the Treaties. Differently, even though Greece and Romania proposed

¹²⁷ Eurostat Database, *Population change – Demographic balance and crude rates at national level*. [online], 2024.

¹²⁸ European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013*, OJ L 2024/1351, 22 May 2024.

¹²⁹ European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU*, OJ L 2024/1348, 22 May 2024.

modifications to the Commission's legislative proposals, their power and role in the negotiations remained marginal. To definitively answer the third condition for successful securitization, thus, to understand whether the audience accepted the securitizing move without significantly affecting it due to power imbalances, references were made to when and how the New Pact was definitively adopted. Following this, a brief comparative analysis was conducted between the requests in national parliament opinion statements and the final legislative acts composing the New Pact. Everything considered, while it was not possible to include additional opinion statements from other Member States because of language obstacles, the cases examined during the integrated social analysis demonstrate that the third condition for a successful securitization of the EU migration and asylum policy area has been met. Indeed, the audience not only accepted the securitizing move initiated by the European Commission, but did so without influencing the legislative measures, which maintained their original form due to power imbalances.

To briefly recap, although CDA was complemented with additional tools to adapt to the needs of this paper, the overall analysis remained consistent with CDA principles and successfully examined the three conditions for securitization. More precisely, Sections 5, 6, and 7 have demonstrated that all three conditions for the successful securitization of the EU migration and asylum policy area through the New Pact on Migration and Asylum have been met.

CONCLUSION

Since its presentation on September 23, 2020, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum has sparked heated debates. While some scholars argue that the Pact provides a structured and human approach to migration, others claim that it may be the culmination of a prolonged securitization process. Within the framework of this paper, the term "securitization" has been understood following the original definition given by the Copenhagen School, which views it as the subjective process by which an issue is transformed into a security threat and treated accordingly¹³⁰. Considering this, the article contributes to the debate by arguing that the adoption of the New Pact has indeed led to the securitization of the EU migration and asylum policy area, aiming to address the threats of human smuggling and irregular migration, while also protecting potential refugees and migrants seeking better living conditions. To reach this conclusion, the paper applied CDA, following the methodology developed by Norman Fairclough¹³¹, to examine the three conditions set for successful securitization: (1) Speech acts in

¹³⁰ B. Buzan, O. Wæver, and J. De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1st edition), cit., pp. 23-26.

¹³¹ N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language*, cit.

migration and asylum policy were made between December 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020; (2) The Communication 2020/609 of the European Commission, which proposes the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, can be identified as a securitizing move in the EU migration and asylum policy area; (3) The audience eventually accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances.

The first condition was examined using textual analysis, corresponding to the first phase of CDA, to identify elements of securitization (threats, solutions, and referent objects) in six public speeches by key Commission representatives. The presence of these elements justifies the European Commission, on behalf of the EU, as a collective security actor, initiating a securitizing move. Using the linguistic categories developed by Strauss and Feiz¹³², the analysis revealed that four out of the six speeches examined could be classified as security speech acts because they identified specific threats, proposed solutions, and defined referent objects to be protected. These patterns were reinforced by references to efficiency, urgency, solidarity, and division. In these four speeches, human smuggling and irregular migration were identified as the main threats to the EU migration and asylum policy area. The proposed solutions included strengthened external border controls and enhanced cooperation with third countries. These measures were explicitly linked to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Thus, in reality, the New Pact represents the Commission's solution to these threats. However, for the sake of clarity and to facilitate a deeper analysis, the article consistently referred to these specific measures when discussing solutions, treating the New Pact as the underlying basis. Furthermore, these speeches identified two referent objects of security. Sometimes migrants seeking international protection or better living conditions were presented as those in need of protection. Other times, the focus shifted to European citizens and, by extension, to European society as a whole. In conclusion, although not essential, patterns related to efficiency, urgency, division, and solidarity helped strengthen the arguments about threats and solutions, definitively clarifying which speeches could be classified as security speech acts within the context of migration and asylum policy.

As recognized by the securitization theory developed in this paper, identifying security speech acts justifies the need for a securitizing move by the European Commission. Related to this, the article hypothesized that this securitizing move corresponded to the Commission Communication 2020/609, which officially presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Proving this would confirm the second condition for successful securitization, showing that Communication 2020/609 would serve as a concretization of the securitization process envisaged by the European Commission in its speech acts. To test this hypothesis, the paper used discourse analysis, corresponding to the second phase of CDA, and employed the tools of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The analysis confirmed that the same discourses and narratives identified in the security speech acts also appeared

¹³² S. Strauss and P. Feiz. *Discourse Analysis. Putting our Worlds into Words*, cit.

in Communication 2020/609. The only significant difference was that Communication 2020/609 focuses on the protection of potential refugees and legal migrants, abandoning the utilitarian narrative that advocated adopting the New Pact to protect European society. The paper has argued that the Commission intentionally chose to emphasize the role of poor migrants, understanding that this approach would increase its legitimacy and better justify the securitization through the New Pact. The fulfillment of the second condition confirms that the securitization process in the EU migration and asylum policy area through the New Pact was initiated thanks to the adoption of Communication 2020/609, which officially presented the document.

At this stage, and in line with the securitization theory developed, the third condition shifts focus to the negotiation phase and the final adoption of the New Pact. Examining these last two phases of the political process is essential to understanding whether the EU, as a collective security actor, has effectively securitized the area of migration and asylum policy through the Pact. To verify the third condition for successful securitization, it remained to prove that the audience, embodied in the EU Member States, accepted the securitizing move without significantly influencing it due to power imbalances. This would also confirm that, as theorized in the securitization framework, the audience has a pivotal role in the securitization process, acting as the ultimate judge in accepting or refusing the securitizing move. To examine this, the paper used social analysis, corresponding to the third phase of CDA, and anchored the investigation to Fairclough's theory of "power in discourse" and Isabella Chaffee's research on the New Pact negotiations¹³³. The analysis focused on Communication 2020/609 and the national parliament opinion statements of Greece and Romania. It revealed that during negotiations for the adoption of the New Pact, the European Commission was the subject holding the most power, given its role as the executive arm of the EU, as recognized by the Treaties. Differently, even though Greece and Romania proposed modifications to the Commission legislative proposals composing the New Pact, the power and role of the audience in the negotiations remained marginal. Despite revealing power imbalances during the negotiations phase, the social analysis alone could not fully demonstrate the rest of the third condition, notably that the audience accepted the securitizing move and did so without significantly affecting the final legislative acts due to power imbalances. To address this, the social analysis was complemented with references to when and how the New Pact was definitively adopted, as well as a comparative study. Excerpts from the "political journey" of the New Pact highlighted that this latter and its legislative acts were approved by the European Parliament on April 10, 2024, and formally adopted by the Council on May 14th¹³⁴. A brief comparative

¹³³ N. Fairclough, *Language and power*, cit. and I. Chaffee, *An Internal "Press"-ing Divide. Power Dynamics within the EU as evidenced through New Pact on Migration and Asylum discourses*, cit.

¹³⁴ European Commission, *Pact on Migration and Asylum: A Common EU System to Manage Migration*. [Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu), Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, cit.

analysis between the requests made by Member States in their opinion statements and the final legislative acts composing the New Pact revealed that the audience not only accepted the securitizing move initiated by the EU but did so without influencing the legislative measures, which maintained their original form due to pre-existing power imbalances.

Notwithstanding the comprehensive approach developed in this article, certain aspects of securitization could not be explored. For example, this paper analyzed securitization through the New Pact by focusing on the phases of proposal, negotiation with Member States, and final adoption. Future research endeavors could explore its impact once the New Pact becomes applicable, thus expanding the securitization framework developed here to include assessments of the practical outcomes of its provisions. Furthermore, this article analyzed national parliament opinion statements to identify the reactions of Member States during negotiations for the New Pact. Although this method is well-established in the literature and has led to some interesting results, only two Member States were analyzed in this research due to language barriers with non-English opinion statements. Future research endeavors could expand this analysis to include the missing opinion statements, namely those of Germany, Portugal, and Spain. Similarly, by analyzing the opinions of national parliaments, this article did not examine the reactions of representatives of Member State governments, which also reflect the will of the Member States. Future research endeavors could draw on this paper for the concept of securitization, but provide a different interpretation of the audience through a focus on the opinions of governments.

In conclusion, this article has tried to answer the research question by demonstrating the fulfillment of all three conditions for securitization. It has been proven that the EU, through the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, has indeed securitized the migration and asylum policy area. Specifically, the analysis revealed that the Pact introduces measures aimed at strengthening the EU border controls and enhancing cooperation with third countries to address the threats of irregular migration and human smuggling, while also protecting potential refugees and legal migrants. In this context, only time will reveal whether strengthening external borders and improving partnerships with third countries will effectively protect potential refugees and legal migrants from the identified threats or, conversely, will put them at even more risk by making it harder for them to enter Europe.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Vice-President Margaritis Schinas opening remarks to the Civil Liberties Committee of the European Parliament.
16 December 2019

Honourable Chair, Mister López Aguilar,
Honourable Members,

It is a great pleasure to join you tonight for our first dialogue since I took office. When we last met – at the hearing in October – the setting was quite different, with your colleagues of the Culture and Education Committee also in the room, for a discussion designed to focus on and scrutinise intentions. Tonight I am here, at your full disposal, to talk about actions. About how we take forward our strategic priorities on migration and on security, and about how these fit within the broader work plan for promoting our European way of life. I hope this will become a regular, frank and substantive exchange between us – the importance and the urgency of the tasks ahead of us call for nothing less than that. You can count on my personal presence and contribution to the work of this Committee. And I too, rely greatly on your proactive and constructive input as we take on issues that are at the very core of European citizens' concerns and of their expectations from our Union.

Migration has been a top priority for the EU in the past years and will remain so. But we need a step change. A lot has been achieved, but there is still much to do to have in place the sustainable system we need to face the present and future challenges.

President von der Leyen has entrusted me with coordinating the work on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

“Pact” is a very noble word. It underlines the need to find new common ground on an issue that has been bitterly divisive for too long. The need for a new consensus on how we collectively shape and manage the realities of migration.

To do that, we need to listen. This is why I am here today. And this is why, together with Commissioner Johansson, we have launched a dialogue with Member States to get their views on how to build an efficient migration management system. We already visited Greece, Germany and France, and will continue this outreach exercise in the coming weeks.

I was encouraged by these first contacts, as well as by my discussion with ministers at the Justice and Home Affairs Council earlier this month. There is a shared understanding that on this, we cannot afford to fail.

A recurring message we got was that we need to be comprehensive, and strike the right balance between solidarity and responsibility.

I share this view.

And even though it's too early to speak about the exact structure and content of the Pact, I trust we all agree that we cannot continue to look at the various aspects of migration separately. We must apply a whole-of-route approach, acknowledging that the internal and external aspects of migration are inextricable from one another.

A new Pact means making our external borders strong enough to support the area of free movement so emblematic of our Union.

This requires accelerating the full operationalisation of the new European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, and stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers who exploit human misery for profit.

It requires an effective system of returns for those who do not have the right to stay. Frontex will now have a broader mandate to better assist the Member States in the return process.

It requires putting in place asylum procedures that are more efficient and robust, addressing the problem of secondary movements. The political link between Schengen and asylum is clear: we must address the shortcomings in our asylum system to re-establish confidence and return to a normally functioning Schengen area.

A new Pact also means agreeing on legal pathways to Europe, to equip our labour markets and industries with the right talent and skills through legal migration.

And it means building comprehensive partnerships with countries of origin and transit, by mobilising our trade, visa, mobility, investment and development policies to this end.

I will work hand in hand with the High Representative/Vice President Borrell and with Commissioners Urpilainen, Varhelyi, Lenarcic and Hogan towards this shared objective – to put all tools at our disposal to good use and to develop approaches tailored to each partner country's specific situation.

Commissioner Johansson and I already visited Turkey, a key partner of strategic importance and a crucial player in a volatile region, hosting close to 4 million refugees. Both sides reiterated the importance of the EU-Turkey Statement, having now fully mobilised the 6 billion euros of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. In an increasingly difficult context for EU-Turkey relations, migration is one issue on which both sides realise that we must continue to engage constructively.

Coming to our security agenda, I took a clear commitment to you in October – that I would work towards completing our Security Union in a way that addresses both traditional and modern threats.

I stand by this commitment.

Next year we will put forward a new Strategy for Internal Security that tackles areas with a strong cross-border dimension such as terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime, stepping up law enforcement cooperation and closing down information gaps. Linked to this, we will look at Europol's mandate.

A swift agreement on a Regulation to prevent the dissemination of terrorist content online is essential to halt radicalisation and violent extremism.

Our new Strategy will include measures to step up the fight against serious and organised crime, taking account of the ways technological progress has modified their operations.

In the fight against cybercrime, we will pay particular attention to the protection of the most vulnerable citizens. Child sexual abuse online has experienced an exponential growth, and we are working on targeted proposals to address it decisively.

But the ever-evolving nature of security threats calls for a cross-cutting approach, going beyond the typical home affairs perspective and looking into the security dimension of policies ranging from digital to energy, from financial services to health and transport.

This is where I see the clear added value of my portfolio.

We will work to enhance EU's ability to prevent, detect and respond to hybrid threats. We will improve the interoperability of our information systems.

And we will develop a sound approach to fifth generation networks that is fit for our global age, but also genuinely European. With billions of connected objects and systems, carrying sensitive information, it is essential to ensure the cybersecurity and resilience of 5G networks.

Protecting our digital critical infrastructure must go hand in hand with protecting our physical infrastructure. We will invest in a flexible and risk-based approach to build resilience against all types of threats, from drones to insider threats, and to take better account of interdependencies between essential services.

Every one of our proposals on security will integrate – by design – full respect of fundamental rights, including the protection of personal data.

This is a personal priority of mine.

Yes, we need a robust security strategy fit for addressing the challenges of a digitised and globalised world. But we need to do this on our terms, in line with our values, in line with the Treaties, and with a focus on people.

Honourable Members,
dear colleagues and friends,

When I stood before you as Vice-President-designate two months ago, I pledged to put people at the centre of every policy and every action under my responsibility. Since day one, we have started working on this premise with my fellow members of the Commission who form the core group for “Promoting our European Way of Life”.

I chaired our first meeting last week, where we agreed on a number of key work strands, further to the two I already mentioned: Together with Stella Kyriakides we will work towards a comprehensive European Cancer Plan.

With Mariya Gabriel, we will put forward a set of actions to make the European Education Area a reality by 2025 – making education more accessible and inclusive, promoting lifelong and cross-border learning, and putting special focus on digital education.

And with Nicolas Schmidt, we will be updating the European Skills Agenda – filling skills shortages and supporting reskilling to foster a dynamic labour market that meets the needs of our economy.

My responsibility is to ensure that all these elements work seamlessly together and are woven into the same fabric of the resilient societies of tomorrow to create equal opportunities and support everyone who is part of our society, including all those who have chosen to make Europe their home.

We will present specific proposals for the integration and inclusion of third-country nationals. And we must harness the full potential of culture and sport to bring our communities closer together, especially young people.

Programmes such as Erasmus+, DiscoverEU, the European Solidarity Corps and the European Social Fund have a key role to play.

President von der Leyen has also tasked me with leading our dialogue with religious and non-confessional organisations, and our work against the rising scourge of antisemitism. This is a threat not only to Jewish communities, but to our way of life as a whole, and it has to be tackled on a horizontal level: from security to education and awareness-raising.

Over the next months, I will work to further crystalize and operationalise each of these work strands.

I will do so in a way that ensures they complement and reinforce each other with the central objective of building stronger, more inclusive, more cohesive and more resilient European societies.

I will seek your involvement and input every step of the way – starting from this discussion tonight.

Appendix B

Intervention (via video conference) in European Parliament LIBE Committee on the situation at the Union's external borders in Greece.

2 April 2020

We are in the middle of a crisis, and most likely it will get worse before it gets better. So what is needed in this time of crisis? We need immediate operational action. Second, we need solidarity, between people, between Member States and globally. Now it's time to protect the most vulnerable, and to protect our capacity to help.

And third, in times of crisis it is very important that we stick to our values and respect fundamental rights.

We must make sure that any crisis, not the corona crisis nor any other crisis are being used to harm the rule of law or the fundamental values of our union.

Refugee camps, in countries of first asylum, are severely ill-equipped to support a large number of persons who already live in precarious conditions. The spreading of the virus in such contexts may result in a massive humanitarian crisis.

This is a danger, both for refugees hosted in third countries outside the EU and for those living in unbearable conditions on the Greek islands. We now know that in Greece we've had the first cases in a migrant camp outside Athens. There are twenty confirmed cases in this camp. I think that they can manage. This is a well-managed camp, and they have access to health care, but still it's a strong warning signal.

There have also been six confirmed cases on Lesbos, outside the migratory camps. What we need to do now is to take immediate action to protect people.

The Greek government and the Greek authorities of course are responsible. But the EU Commission is providing massive support, and we must do that. And we also need the massive support of other Member States.

We are in more or less constant contact with the Greek government and the Greek authorities and we have agreed upon an emergency response action plan. I will not go through the whole plan, but it contains for example that now we need to start relocating people, vulnerable people, out of the camps into the hotel rooms that are prepared and are now empty, and to find these vulnerable people, so that they will not get infected if or when the virus reaches the camps.

They have to be separated. We need to send now medical supplies to each island, both for migrants and for the local people of course on the islands.

We have already supported with a lot of medical equipment, and we will continue to do so. The new arrivals have to be separated from those that are already in the camps. We need to do much more testing to help people that are positive into quarantine. We need of course travel restrictions and we need have a lot of information for people how they should act.

But we also need to ease the pressure on these camps on the islands. We are now working on the relocation of the unaccompanied minors. We have eight Member States that have committed

themselves to take 1600 unaccompanied minors.

And I think that the first ones will be relocated this week, or at the latest next week, before Easter at least. And we are working in a very positive atmosphere with these Member States, who are actually showing concrete solidarity, now, when it's needed the most. I know that the Greek authorities have identified around 2,000 unaccompanied minors who have been age assessed and are ready to be relocated. We are also working on the voluntary returns to ease the pressure on the islands and this programme is already running. And we are providing a lot of financial support.

I will go through this for you.

Immediately we have available 350 million euros.

This is the continuing support to reception capacity in the mainland. Rental accommodation for 25,000 beds. Cash assistance to 90,000 migrants provided by the UNHCR. This is total 190 million.

Support increase of the reception capacity in the mainland: 31 camps, management and service provided by IOM – Approximately 100 million.

Continuation of targeted support to key protection activities for families and children, the provision of services to the Kara Tepe site in Lesvos run by UNHCR – approximately 25 million.

The support of the temporary accommodation scheme in hotels to get the vulnerable people relocated out of the camps – approximately 35 million. This money is already working and available.

Then, we would like to have the additional 350 million. This should be used: 280 million will be made available for the construction of five new multi-purpose reception and identification centres on the Greek islands during this year, to provide far more adequate up to standard accommodation. That's 220 million.

The voluntary return and reintegration assistance will be 10 million euros.

And then: service to the new camps and emergency items, food, transportation, additional staff for medical teams as well as increased support to the Greek asylum service – 50 million euros.

And then 50 million is proposed to be made available for ISF Border & VISA to cover the cost related to the deployment and operational cost of border guards and police officers at the external borders of Greece and Bulgaria – 50 million.

Additionally, and in an effort to step up capacities, the European border and coast guard Frontex will be reinforced by 10 million euros, and finally, 10 million to the European Asylum Support Office EASO for the deployment of experts in Greece.

So, what I would like to end with, what is equally important in these times it's also that people must have the right to apply for asylum. I very much welcome the announcement of the Greek government who told me that now, the new arrivals that come during March will have the right to apply for asylum. This is very, very

important. In these times, it is important to stand up for our values and fundamental rights, as I also said in my beginning.

Honourable Members,

May I just add one other aspect, not only applicable to Greece, but for the whole European Union. In these times of crisis, there is always a risk of xenophobia rising. I think it is important for us to recognise the important contributions a lot of people with migrant backgrounds now are providing. As health care workers, doctors, providing services or doing voluntary work. Across Europe, migrants are mobilising to support respective host societies. I think this is very important to recognise.

I also welcome the measures that several Member States and regions are taking to facilitate the access to welfare and healthcare of migrants and refugees. It's of crucial importance in this phase to implement the recommendations coming from the WHO organisation in this regard, ensuring that no segment of our societies is left behind and is fully supported.

I would like to stress the importance of forming a more welcoming society. Many migrants are in a vulnerable situation in their countries. Vulnerable situation in the labour market, a huge risk of being unemployed, vulnerable situation when it comes to economic resources.

To fight xenophobia, discrimination and racism, and to help vulnerable migrants, I will also make the consultation with civil society, employers, trade unions and other relevant organisations to develop options to protect and support migrants and refugees and maximise the economic contribution they can bring in the recovery phase, not only in Greece, but all over the European Union.

Thank you.

*Appendix C***Speech by Commissioner Johansson on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum
Brussels, 23 September 2020**

Migration has defined our societies for centuries, enriched our cultures and shaped our lives. So said President von der Leyen in her State of the Union speech and I think this is very crucial.

Migration is normal- migration has always been here, migration will always be here.

Sometimes in a debate we try to make a link between migration and crisis. But most of the migrants that come to the European Union come here legally. Last year 2.4 million migrants got a residence permit in the Europe Union. Most of them because they fell in love with an EU citizen and they marry. But also for other family reasons. To work here, to study here and also some that got asylum.

Last year around one million left the European Union, and that means we have an extra one, one and a half million coming to the European Union every year and we need them because we are an aging society.

And many of those are becoming European citizens. Last year almost 700,000 new European citizenships were issued.

So this works quite well I should say, And we need migration.

But in the headlines, in the news is what doesn't work so well. And that is the situation with the irregular arrivals.

Last year we had 140,000 irregular arrivals to the European Union. This is really what we are addressing now in our proposal – to manage in a much better way.

And I think that when we are discussing the proposal that we now have put on the table – I understand a lot of people are still in the mood of the situation in 2015. But we are not there. In 2015 we had 1.8 million irregular arrivals to the European Union – almost all of them were refugees. As I said last year there were 140,000 irregular arrivals and a minority of them (one third) were refugees.

The others are not refugees and they will have a negative asylum decision and a return decision – and that shows also what we need to address better. The effectiveness on return and readmissions to the countries of origin.

We need fewer irregular arrivals and instead have more regular arrivals. That's why we have the focus on legal pathways both for migrants to come to contribute to our economy and for refugees that need international protection. And I am very proud that the European Union is doing so much when it comes to the resettlement of refugees. And we are also in our proposal stepping up on that with a new community sponsored resettlement.

To be able to have fewer irregular arrivals we need to fight the human smugglers- these are well organised criminal networks, that are earning a lot of money by smuggling people into the European Union and at the same time a lot of people are risking their lives. This is not how it should be done and as Margaritis just pointed

out the importance of working closely together with third countries and with partner countries to fight the smuggling together.

We also need to focus more on returns and that you can see in our package today – there are a lot of new initiatives when it comes to being more effective on return. And I am coming back to that.

It is important to have good readmission agreements with third countries and that's going to be prioritised.

I will go through how we should address the problems and the challenges we are facing. As Margaritis rightly said we have had a lot of dialogue with Member States, with the Parliament, with other stakeholders to listen: where are the shortcomings are without a common European migration and asylum system. And these we are addressing in our proposal to be able to manage migration better.

Of course, it is fundamental to defend the right to apply for asylum and that means that it is also fundamental how we protect our borders. That we do it in a way that is in compliance with the Geneva Convention and the right to apply for asylum.

We will propose a new independent monitoring mechanism for all Member States to implement in guidance with the European Agency for Fundamental Rights to make sure that there are no push backs at the borders.

When irregular arrivals come to the European Union there will be a mandatory screening process. This will take a maximum of five days. There you will do the registration into Eurodac. In Eurodac we will have much more information as a result of our new proposal than in the current one. You can find out also whether this person has been in Europe before for example and already have a decision maybe.

There will also be security checks, health checks and a decision on which country is responsible for this application and which kind of procedures should this person go through.

If these asylum applicants have a connection to another Member State, like having a sibling there, working there, studying there, then the other Member State is responsible for the application, and to process that.

If a person has come from a country with a very low recognition rate, under 20 per cent, and is not a family with small children, is not an unaccompanied minor, is not a person with medical needs, then this person should go through a border procedure.

And this border procedure has the same rights for the person to have his or her application processed in a proper and fair way. But it has to be done very quickly. And I think that many of those will have a negative decision, but not all of them. Some will have a positive and then of course they have asylum in the country.

Why do we do this?

We do this, because it would make it easier, for voluntary returns.

I think when a person has been living in country for years, having relations, falling in love, then it's much more difficult, both for the individual and for the authorities to do the return to the country of origins. It's important that we can have a decision on returns very quickly – in twelve weeks. And then also be able to do the returns.

This is also an important message, that you will be returned, if you are coming to the European Union and do not have the right to stay. And I think this is what European citizens ask from us.

I think they say: we are ready to welcome those in need of international protection. We are ready to welcome those that have the legal right to work or study in our union.

But those who do not have the legal right to stay, they have to go back. And this is what we are really focusing on in our proposal. If, as Margaritis said, it is also important that we have a solidarity mechanism. Of course, all Member States have to deal with migration, it's a normal thing. But there could be a situation where the migration pressure is high, or a risk of being high. And then there is a possibility to activate the solidarity mechanism.

And as President von der Leyen just said a few minutes ago, solidarity is not optional. Everyone has to contribute to this solidarity. But there are some possibilities to choose in what way, to show your solidarity. The two main ways to show solidarity are: Either via relocation, of those probably in need of international protection, or with a new return sponsorship, where Member States are helping each other, to actually do the returns of those not eligible to stay, and make sure that they are reintegrated in the country of origin. This solidarity mechanism will also work for search and rescue cases.

Search and rescue is the responsibility for the Member States – or the coastal states. Saving lives is always essential and always our obligation. But we must always make sure that when persons that have been saved by search and rescue and saved at sea, are being disembarked in the European Union, they are being disembarked in the European Union, not only in a Member State.

And that's why we need this solidarity. Showing that also other Member States must help with the relocation of people that are being disembarked through search and rescue, or in other ways supporting the Member State, where they are being disembarked.

I will end with what's also important here. That we should have also more predictability.

Today, one of our colleagues in college told the story of 13 unaccompanied minors, coming to her country, being relocated from Lesbos, and being welcomed.

And I think it is such a huge difference, when you have the names of those coming. When you know what flight, they are coming with. It's so much easier, for a country to welcome these, and have a swift integration. The unpredictability, is much more difficult, to deal with. And this is our aim, to have more of a Europeanised system, where we help each other, to have a more predictability in the system, so that we should not be surprised, so we can deal with the situation, before it becomes a crisis.

Thank you.

*Appendix D***Speech by Vice-President Schinas on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum
Brussels, 23 September 2020**

This is an important moment. The Pact on Migration and Asylum we are presenting today has been a long time in the making. The time for action is now. You will recall that President von der Leyen announced it at the very start of the mandate as one of the flagship initiatives of this College.

Of course, it was natural that other political priorities had to take centre stage this year (pandemic, MFF/recovery) but these proposals remain eagerly anticipated and the devastating fires in Moria this month have added a renewed sense of urgency to put this crucial topic back on top of the agenda.

Because the clock has run out on how long we can live in a house half built. The problems we see now on migration – in Moria and elsewhere – are not because of Europe but because of the lack of Europe.

The series of proposals we are presenting today is one that allows for a compromise. But we did not hatch this package ourselves in Brussels. In preparing the Pact our starting point was listening to everyone and we carried out extensive consultations to ensure that we did – doing an entire tour de capitales when this was still possible, speaking at length to the European Parliament as well as to civil society.

And you can see the results of those consultations in the texts we are putting forward today. The experiences since 2015 have exposed clearly that no one Member State experiences migration in the same way. Italy does not live migration in the same way as Greece. Nor does Germany live migration the same way as France. Nor Austria as Denmark. Each face different and unique challenges – and I would hazard to say that no one's concerns are more legitimate than the others. They all deserve to be recognised, acknowledged and addressed.

The most important thing is that we start discussions on the Pact on a solid basis that takes everyone's concerns into account. The wounds of 2016 are still fresh and we need to start with everyone around the table.

For us, this means it is clear we cannot present a partial package. We made this mistake in 2016, when the Commission proposals presented only half the picture: we presented a strong solidarity framework – rightly so in the wake of a humanitarian crisis – but without the corresponding responsibility elements in the form of border and screening procedures. This is the picture we are now trying to complete.

But it would be a mistake to reduce the topic of migration to a binary discussion between solidarity and responsibility, between voluntary and mandatory. It is not the case that for some to win, others must lose. That is not – and never was – what Europe is about.

Otherwise, we are just doing a re-enactment of ‘Back to the Future’: the journey to the future in which you keep encountering the problems of the past. It’s time we updated the script on migration.

Migration is a multifaceted topic and it does not do anyone justice to over-simplify it.

With that in mind, allow me to outline for you the broad strokes of what must crucially be a comprehensive approach to migration.

The New Pact is like a house with three floors, comprised of: The external dimension – centred around strengthened partnerships with countries of origin and transit Robust management of our external borders and Firm but fair internal rules, which ensure that solidarity is provided to Member States under pressure.

Starting from the outside in, first, the external dimension: The new Pact represents a change of paradigm in the way we engage with our international partners on migration, recognising that this is a global phenomenon which calls for global solutions and responsibility-sharing.

Over the past years, the European Union has invested significantly in deepening its international cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination of refugees and migrants. Since 2015, we have dedicated over 9 billion euros to supporting refugees and migrants outside the EU, providing life-saving assistance to millions of vulnerable people, supporting host communities, and fostering sustainable, development-oriented solutions. We will continue to do so.

Building economic opportunity, especially for the youth, remains a shared priority for us and our partners, and vital to address the root causes of irregular migration. But we must recognise that in some key areas, a lot remains to be done: Smugglers continue to profit by exploiting migrants – endangering lives and selling false hope in blatant disregard for human dignity.

Capacities for effective border management, asylum and reception systems are often lacking.

And so is a well-functioning system for return and readmission. On average every year around 370,000 applications for international protection are rejected in the EU, but only around a third of these persons are returned home. This has to change.

With the Pact, we are proposing concrete ways and tools to step up cooperation in each of these areas.

We know well that a one-size-fits-all approach won’t work. And this is why we are putting the focus on comprehensive, balanced, mutually beneficial partnerships, tailor-made to each partner country’s specific situation, interests and needs.

To support these partnerships, the EU and our Member States will systematically coordinate and bring together a wide range of policy and financing tools: from development cooperation, investment and trade, to employment, visa policy, education and research.

This will include a more strategic, flexible and policy-driven programming of the EU’s external funding, across all relevant headings under the EU budget for the next seven years. Our proposals for the Neighbourhood, Development and

International Cooperation Instrument, with a total envelope of over 70 billion euros, include a 10% target for migration-related actions.

We will seek to intensify our external engagement on migration at all levels: Bilateral, with a particular focus on key countries of origin and transit, for example in Northern Africa, the Western Balkans or Asia; Regional, by strengthening cooperation with partners such as the African Union; and multilateral, through more active engagement with the United Nations and its agencies, and through processes such as the post-Cotonou framework with African, Caribbean and Pacific states.

The message we send with this Pact is that for a truly sustainable approach – one that works for the EU, for our partner countries and for migrants themselves – we have to treat the external and internal dimensions of migration as inextricable. That migration is a strategic priority we are determined to pursue through our external action, in close cooperation with our partners. That we have the tools to do so, and that we will put them all to good use.

Second, we are putting the emphasis on a robust management of the external borders. Under the New Pact: There will be a new and mandatory screening at all borders of all arrivals. Currently the only obligation is for a Member State to take the fingerprints of someone who arrived irregularly and register them. Under the New Pact, all arrivals will be subject to a thorough security, health and identity check. This will allow for immediately directing people immediately to the right procedure.

In a second stage, all those unlikely to get asylum will have to go through mandatory, fast-tracked border procedures with streamlined procedures for dealing quickly with asylum claims and efficiently processing returns.

Together this will create a seamless procedure at our external borders which ensures people are quickly channelled to and through the right procedures.

And this will be complemented by a new European ecosystem geared towards effective returns – with a new EU Coordinator on Returns and Frontex playing its full role as an operational arm for carrying out returns.

On the third floor of our theoretical house, we find firm but fair internal rules: Any credible European migration system must be able to provide for effective solidarity in practice for those Member States who by their geography are the most confronted with migratory challenges.

Our New Pact will therefore provide for a strong solidarity mechanisms where we ensure that Member States always get the support they need.

With our migration Pact, we do not ignore the red lines, we look for a way out between them. We have done so by introducing a new concept: that of return sponsorship – and allow me to pause a second on this as it is important to explain what we mean.

This is a concept that seeks to balance out competing interests – we know that some Member States will never accept mandatory relocation. At the same time, relocation – and not sending border guards or money – is what really alleviates pressure from a Member State facing high numbers of arrivals.

So what we have sought to do is provide a viable alternative to ensure that even if they are not relocated, the same number of people are catered for. The Member State under pressure will get the reassurance that they will always be alleviated of the pressure of the same number of people – either through relocation or by people being returned directly with the support of other Member States’ diplomatic engagement or assistance to return for example. And here sponsoring Member States will be able to focus on nationalities where they see a better chance of completing returns.

At the same time, where solidarity is provided for, the system always leaves Member States with an alternative to relocation. Depending on the level of pressure and the ability of asylum systems to cope, in some cases there are many alternatives, in others, there is only one alternative (in the form of return sponsorship) but there is always this alternative.

In this way, we have struck the right balance.

This new system should be one in which such solidarity becomes the norm. The day to day of migration management in Europe in the future should be characterised by efficient procedures and effective solidarity.

That said, as much as we would like to be architects of the future we also know that we may well end up being firefighters. We have to be prepared for all scenarios. The Pact therefore includes strong crisis resilience and preparedness measures: A new crisis blueprint brings ensures we all know who does what when and sets out the entire array of tools we can use in crisis times; And we are adding one new tool to the box: a new crisis instrument provides a faster solidarity mechanism to react quickly in times of real crisis. And it also introduces temporary derogations and accelerated procedures to adjust to the reality of an overwhelmed system or situations of force majeure.

Let me also point out that we have taken great care throughout this entire Pact to cater for the specificity of search and rescue arrivals – which are not arrivals like any other. They are the result of the fulfilment of a legal obligation to rescue people at sea and every single one of our proposals acknowledges this – as Ylva will explain.

Lastly, a word of caution: we’re not stopping here. There are a number of elements that we will continue to prepare under the umbrella of the Pact and present proposals on in the next months. Allow me to mention two of particular importance: Schengen – we have not forgotten this most crucial of topics. We will next year present a strategy on the future of Schengen, which will include initiatives for a stronger and more complete Schengen.

Legal migration – something we want to be very ambitious on but which deserves its own narrative, divorced from discussions on irregular migration. Which is why we have today launched a public consultation to gather views on this topic and will come with proposals next year. Legal migration is and always will be the voluntary prerogative of Member States but it is one that can be supported by an EU framework and financing.

All of the new proposals we are presenting today must be seen as a connected whole, including alongside and interconnected with the five proposals that still remain on the table. Our proposal is for a system where there is one circuit: screening, border procedure, asylum procedure, return, solidarity, everything must connect seamlessly.

Let me conclude by saying that this is a Pact in which we have learnt the lessons of the past: we have withdrawn and drawn a line under the former “Dublin” system – symbolic as it was of a system that shouldered a disproportionate burden on Member States of first entry and that was not at all equipped to deal with situations of crisis, let alone with the new reality of mixed and constant migration flows on a day to day basis.

Instead we are turning a new leaf with a new Pact on Migration and Asylum. It is designed as a much more effective and comprehensive governance system that ensures that solidarity is effective in practice and that the challenges of migration are addressed comprehensively – be it outside or inside our Union.

We have so much to be proud of in this Union. We are the largest and best regulated market in the world, we have the second strongest currency in the world, we are the champions of human rights, privacy, healthcare, education. A few months ago, EU leaders succeeded in making a huge step forward with an economic recovery fund funded by joint bonds based on the EU budget. We have everything, except a common asylum policy.

The time has come to rally around a single migration policy, befitting of the values our Union so readily embodies in every other field.

Appendix E

Speech by President von der Leyen at the high-level conference on migration and asylum in Europe
Brussels, 19 November 2020

Dear President of the European Parliament, dear David,
Dear President of the Bundestag, lieber Wolfgang Schäuble,
Dear Presidents of the Portuguese and Slovenian Parliaments, dear Eduardo,
dear Igor, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Honourable Members of Parliaments,

Recently the Commission secured the first 300 million doses of a potential coronavirus vaccine from the European company BioNTech. At the same time, the story of the company's co-founder and CEO made headlines. Ugür Şahin came to Germany from Turkey with his mother when he was four years old. He passed his high school exam in Köln and went on to study medicine. Together with his wife, Özlem Türeci, the daughter of another immigrant from Turkey, he later founded the German company that developed a coronavirus vaccine in record time.

Only shortly after the vaccine announcement, another news broke. Sad news this time. A ship with over 120 migrants on board had sunk right off the coast of Libya. According to reports, 74 people died. In another incident, Spanish rescuers were able to save 110 refugees in the Mediterranean. But later – and David you mentioned it – later on board of their ship, a six-month-old baby, Joseph, died.

These two examples highlight just the two of the aspects we have to think about when we discuss the issue of migration. On the one hand, people coming from a migration background will contribute to growth, innovation and social dynamism in a country – and we speak too seldom about that. On the other hand, there are still far too many heartbreaking stories of migrants risking their lives on their way to Europe.

Both examples make clear why it is so important for the European Union to build a system that manages migration in the long term and which is fully grounded in European values. Indeed, this is why the European Commission, at the end of September, adopted its New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Migration is a complex issue. David, you mentioned all the different pillars. And there are many genuine concerns that have to be brought into balance. We have to talk about the people seeking international protection or a better life, exploited by ruthless smugglers. We have to talk about the concerns of countries on the EU's external borders, such as Italy, Greece and Spain. They worry that the efforts needed to manage migration may exceed their capacities. They need the solidarity of others. And of course, we have to talk about those Member States that are concerned, that their own national systems for asylum or integration will not be able to cope in the event of large amounts of migrants.

The current system no longer works. Our New Pact on Migration and Asylum offers a fresh start. The first issue we are focusing on is a robust and fair management of external borders, including more efficient and faster procedures – I think this is crucial.

So it comprises pre-entry screening, an asylum procedure and, of course, where applicable, returns. With this procedure, simple cases will be managed much faster and more effectively than today. At the same time, it will guarantee appropriate treatment to everybody.

The second fundamental element is the fair sharing of responsibility on the one hand and solidarity on the other hand. Those countries that fulfil their legal and moral duties or those which are more exposed than others must be able to rely on the European Union to share responsibility in case of need. And each Member State, without exception, must support Member States under pressure. And they must ensure that the Union meets its humanitarian obligations.

The new system is based on cooperation and flexible forms of support. So this gives a choice to

Member States on how they contribute. But it always guarantees that the required support is given – and that especially at times of pressure on individual Member States.

Thirdly, managing migration well starts – as you have said, David – in the home countries of those who come to Europe. People do not leave their homes easily and embark on such a dangerous journey. So it is poverty, it is the lack of perspectives that are these strong driving forces to leave their home country. The European Union will therefore look and work towards tailor-made and mutually beneficial – this is important – partnerships with third countries.

These will help to address shared challenges such as human trafficking. And, of course, they will help to develop legal pathways and they will tackle the effective implementation of readmission agreements. With our package, we also seek to boost a common EU system for returns to make EU migration rules more effective and credible.

And lastly, we are also proposing ways to better benefit from legal migration into Europe. People who come to Europe legally need clear rights and they need to feel welcomed. They need to be given all necessary opportunities to realise their potential in our societies. Therefore, next week the Commission will present an action plan on integration and inclusion for 2021 to 2027.

As you know, our proposal on the Pact was preceded by extensive consultations with Member States and the European Parliament. You know that Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson travelled from capital to capital to discuss ideas and proposals and were in the European Parliament. Well, after this, it is clear, and I must say it: A solution on migration that fully satisfies everyone does not exist.

We need to come together on this issue and we need to discuss and we need to find compromises: So national parliaments, the European Parliament, the national

governments. We need to acknowledge our differences and we need to overcome them. But we need to move forward now. It should not get stuck.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2015, one of our co-hosts, you, Wolfgang Schäuble, spoke of our European societies having a 'Rendezvous with globalisation'. And these words are still true today. Indeed, migration has always been a fact for Europe – and it always will be. It enriches our societies, it brings new talent to our countries, when well managed. But if not, and we know that by experience, it has the potential to divide us. So given the urgency of local situations in several Member States, there is no point in fighting the battles of yesterday.

We need a sustainable solution. And we need it now. We owe it to the migrants, we owe it to the refugees. And we owe it to our citizens.

Many thanks for listening to me and I look forward to the discussion.

Appendix F

Keynote address by Commissioner Johansson at the Schengen Forum
Brussels, 30 November 2020

35 years ago, five countries took a pioneering step. They agreed to abolish border controls between them. And 25 years ago, the Schengen Agreement, came into force. It is also an area of prosperity, an area of trust. We have 26 countries, more than 400 million people that share this area of freedom, security and justice. Trust means also that we, as good neighbours, don't have to knock before passing by each other's house. That trust also means to watch out for each other's security. Now with the coronavirus, this trust has been put to the test. But I also do think that we will pass this test. During the crisis of the pandemic, I think we have shown the value of Schengen. And I think that now when we hopefully soon go into the economic recovery we will also need to see the importance of the free movement and the Schengen area. 40% of the Schengen territory is border regions - 40%. That means that a lot of people live in an area where crossing borders freely is part of their every-day life; is part of their every-day economic activities - it is also part of their identity I should say. So it is important that we can keep these areas open. I think we all have all gotten a lot of letters in the Spring as the virus hit and lockdowns began. Our helplines got thousands of calls from citizens in distress. Stuck behind borders, unable to go home. Not knowing what to do. During April and May, I met with you if not every day, at least some weeks we had meetings three times a week - very frequently as Margaritis just said. But I think that also shows that together we kept essential goods and medicine flowing. Together we made sure people could return home. And in the end, we restored those freedoms. And now when we are facing the biggest economic crisis in our history probably, free movement will also be our most important instruments, for recovery. It is clear that internal border controls will damage the GDP significantly. Several studies like France Stratégie, Bertelsmann Foundation and our own research all points to that. According to France Stratégie an overall loss of 100 billion by 2025 will be the result if we have internal borders. In the context of post COVID economic recovery, this is not acceptable. Citizens also mentioned the economic situation as the most pressing issue facing the EU. Similarly, the economic situation has overtaken health as the most important issue at national level- rising from seventh to first position.

And a functioning Schengen is central in meeting these concerns.

In many ways Schengen is stronger than ever. But the challenges of today are not those of yesterday. That's why we need to modernize our legal rules and make them fit for purpose.

We need for instance to reply to the digitalisation challenge.

We need a proper operational and political governance of Schengen. That's why I have invited you to this Schengen Forum.

An opportunity to shape the future of Schengen together, Ministers, representatives of the European Parliament, and Commission.

An area of freedom, security and justice needs effective protection of our common external borders.

And that's of course why we are building up Frontex with a standing corps of 10,000 people, that's what we need to do even more to protect our external borders.

And we need close cooperation to effectively prevent and combat crime and terrorism. And in this area we also need to do more when it comes to interoperability, cooperation and I will next week present new proposals on internal security.

And we also need of course well-functioning management of migration and asylum and that's why we put forward a new pact on migration and asylum in September. And that is what Council and Parliament are now working on.

But let me be clear, internal border checks are not an effective tool to prevent crime and terrorism. It should be the measures of last resort.

We must also remember, border checks this summer did not stop the virus.

Border controls at internal borders unfortunately won't stop terrorists.

However, we know border controls will stop transport, trade and tourists.

What will be effective to stop terrorists is police work and security cooperation. Closer cooperation in this area should indeed become the rule.

This year not only a debate about border guards and sniffer dogs. And that is because the scent we need to follow is also online.

We need to be more effective to protect our citizens also on line. We need to improve our cooperation on all these matters.

That's why next week I will present proposals to boost Europol. And a new European counter- terrorism agenda.

I am also working on proposals for a police cooperation code. And on proposals to improve information exchange – of DNA, fingerprints, number plates.

Granted, a shared external border means a shared responsibility for security.

In a normal year, we have 540 million tourists coming to Europe. In recent years we have had smaller numbers of irregular arrivals – last year 140,000 and probably even fewer this year.

But this is for sure something where everyone has to be properly checked and screened at the borders. Nobody, as President von der Leyen said, should be able to come into the Schengen area undetected. Everybody needs be checked and security risks must be identified.

It is not acceptable that according to a Frontex report, 22% of those entering the Schengen area were not checked towards the Schengen Information System. An area without internal borders needs a fully secure external border. I think we all agree on that and I think we all agree that we need to do even more in this aspect.

In the last five years we've greatly improved our external border management. By building a state of the art architecture for information exchange. Systems that we are expanding and updating as we speak.

If you have an airport, you have an external Schengen border. That's all countries represented here today. But some countries protect a larger part of our shared external borders, than others.

From next year, a new standing corps of the European Border and Coast Guard will support these countries: providing expertise and setting the standard.

We also need to make sure the state of art information systems we agreed to are fully used and become interoperable.

Interoperability should be high on the agenda in all Member States.

An area of free movement also demands a shared approach on migration.

That's why we put forward the New Pact on Migration Asylum to help us better manage migration. Balancing responsibility and solidarity, and help prevent secondary movements, for example.

We also need to complete Schengen. Geographically. All EU citizens deserve to enjoy freedom of movement. It's time to extend the Schengen circle of trust, to those Member States that fulfil the required conditions.

And we need to upgrade Schengen, to meet new challenges.

To manage shared borders, we need stronger cooperation and shared governance. We must replace provisional measures by permanent structures – To respond effectively to future pandemics, terrorist attacks or sudden peaks in irregular migration.

To improve constantly how Schengen works, we must also constantly evaluate how Schengen functions.

Last week I presented a report on the functioning of Schengen in the last five years. I also welcome the study the European Parliament presented last Friday.

Next year, I plan to present a package of proposals. A Strategy on the future of Schengen. A new Schengen Borders Code and a new Schengen evaluation mechanism.

Today's Schengen Forum is a first step, towards that shared Schengen governance. Because to do this I need to first discuss and listen to you.

My proposed way forward is that after today's discussion we continue at technical level with workshops to go deeper into the topics and to prepare for the next Schengen Forum in April to guide me and the Commission before we present the Schengen Strategy and new Proposals on the Schengen Border Code and Evaluation Mechanism in May.

Today is the start of a discussion to shape the future of Schengen and free movement for decades to come.

As you have seen from the discussion paper, I would like us to discuss, among other things:

How to further strengthen Schengen governance;

How to better protect our external borders, looking at possible challenges into the implementation of the many measures already agreed so far;

How to improve all the other compensatory measures to support the whole Schengen architecture;

How digital technology, artificial intelligence can help to modernise Schengen;

How to increase the effectiveness of the Schengen evaluation mechanism;

What can we learn from the Covid-19 experience and how we can use Schengen for economic recovery;

And finally how to make border checks truly a measure of last resort and the alternatives for border checks.

I want this to be a concrete, pragmatic and operational discussion on the way forward. Let us in our discussions always remember:

Our citizens overwhelmingly support free movement. And see Schengen as a crowning European achievement.

They demand economic recovery as soon as possible.

They want to work, they want to spend, they want to travel. And they want to be safe.

We know that Europeans worry about their security only when things go wrong.

Their priority is building a secure economic future for themselves and their families.

Our job is to make sure that the road we are travelling on is as safe as possible, but we must never forget the destination for millions.

Economic recovery, security and prosperity in an area of freedom, security and justice. Thank you.