



More money, surveillance and solidarity is needed to save immigrants trying to cross the Mediterranean sea.

Urging enhanced global migration governance, the United Nations independent expert on the human rights of migrants, Francois Crepeau, [has called](#) for the establishment of a single, rights-based international body, preferably within the UN system, to comprehensively tackle the myriad aspects of global migration.

Yesterday, on December 4, the EU Commission asked its Member States to take action in order to prevent future disasters like the Lampedusa accident, where over 360 immigrants died.

“States would have more control if there was more migration governance. Currently, migrants themselves, often with the help of smugglers, are crossing borders regardless of State policies,” Mr Crepeau has said, adding that the sad irony is that the very policies being put in place to address migration were actually weakening States, harming migrants and empowering criminal smuggling networks.

Further, he said that people migrate irregularly due to a lack of regular channels for migration, and largely in response to unrecognized labour needs in destination States.

“If States recognized such [labour needs](#), including for low-skilled work, and open up more regular migration channels, as well as sanction unscrupulous employers who exploit irregular

migrants, this would lead to fewer irregular border crossings, less smuggling of migrants, less loss of life at borders, and fewer migrants' rights violations," he noted.

"I believe the tragic incidents in the Mediterranean over the past few weeks show just how relevant this discussion is," Mr Crépeau said. "I urge all destination States to consider this carefully, in order to prevent loss of lives at sea, in deserts, in mountains, and other dangerous routes irregular migrants are taking, [escaping from poverty](#) and violence, seeking a better future for themselves and their families," he said.

The European officials proposed allowing people to apply for asylum in Europe from abroad, part of a package of measures intended to discourage dangerous, illegal journeys like the one that cost the lives of hundreds of immigrants off the coast of Italy in October.

The Commission said it was "ready to explore possibilities for protected entries into the EU," or allow refugees to go through the asylum-application process from abroad. This option, if implemented, could help thousands of people who might otherwise pay smugglers—and risk their lives on the journey—to seek asylum in Northern European countries that have a good track record of accepting such refugees.

The European Commission also suggested beefing up patrols in the Mediterranean, from Cyprus to Spain, under the mantle of Frontex, the EU's border agency with an additional 14 million euro per year.

Critics like Amnesty International and the International Red Cross argue, however, that the EU still focuses too much on protecting its borders [rather than protecting people and saving lives.](#)