

EU grapples with asylum reform as migrant entries surge

Eight years after facing a refugee crisis in 2015, the European Union is still struggling with how to reform its asylum system — just as migrant entries are once again rising.

Reaching consensus among the bloc's 27 nations has become more complicated with the growing influence of the far-right in the politics of several member states.

The issue, kicked along the road for years, will be on the agenda of a Thursday meeting of EU interior ministers, with a focus on how to speed up the process of returning undocumented migrants to their country of origin in cases where their asylum bid fails.

Sweden, the current holder of the EU presidency, will host the meeting.

The Scandinavian country, among the more generous in terms of giving asylum before 2015-2016, has since October had a coalition government reliant on a nationalist far-right party, the Sweden Democrats (SD).

That alliance "is really stepping up the restrictive approach" introduced under the previous Swedish government, an expert at Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Bernd Parusel, told AFP.

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