

Europe Migrant Crisis: Czech Leader tells 700,000 ‘Illegal migrants’ that ‘they need to go home’

Prior to meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš said that 700,000 “illegal migrants” should go back to their home countries.

“There are 700,000 illegal migrants—they need to go home,” the Czech Prime Minister told *The Guardian*.

Babiš, along with leaders from Poland and Hungary, is against a European Union plan to spend more than \$11 billion on Frontex, the EU’s border and coast guard agency. The proposed plan would allow for the agency to increase the number of border officers from 1,500 to 10,000. Babiš, however, says that the EU should instead invest in a strategy similar to the Marshall Plan, which would convince likely migrants to stay in Africa.



Czech Republic’s Prime Minister Andrej Babiš arrives at the European Council in Brussels, on October 18. Babiš said on Wednesday that 700,000 “illegal migrants” should go back to their home countries. EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/GETTY

“These people should stay home and we should help them in Africa. The people around Syria...they would like to return home. Smugglers made €5.7 billion (\$6.5 billion) in 2016 and we have to stop it. They have their culture, we have our culture. They have their values, but we want to keep [our] values, Babiš told *The Guardian*.

The businessman turned politician said that instead of providing more money and expanding Frontex, countries should be individually charged with protecting their borders.

The Czech prime minister joined Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki at

Frontex's headquarters in Warsaw last week where the pair reiterated their opposition to enlarging the agency, saying that such a move would endanger the sovereignty of individual countries and reduce the amount of funding provided for infrastructure.

"We worry that more money for Frontex will mean less money for structural funds, less money for road or railway development," Morawiecki said, according to Euractiv.

"We central European parties want to finally catch up to the quality of life enjoyed by Western Europe. That's the point of the structural funds," he continued.

Babiš made his views on migration known when he refused to take in a portion of around 450 migrants rescued at sea in July, saying that taking in more migrants was a "road to hell" for Europe, adding that the bloc needed to send a clear message that it would no longer accept migrants.

More than 94,000 migrants have arrived in Europe by sea since January, according to the United Nations International Organization for Migration. This is a significantly lower amount than last year, when 146,898 migrants made the journey between January and October.

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