

Italy's New Populist Government Pledges to Deport 500,000 Migrants

Italy's new populist government is expected to deport 500,000 immigrants from the country. Giuseppe Conte, who became Prime Minister on June 1, heads a coalition between the Five Star Movement and Lega parties. Conte's cabinet, comprised of chiefs of anti-establishment parties, is the first populist government in Western Europe. The leader of Lega (Italian for "League"), Matteo Salvini, is to be interior minister, while Five Star head Luigi Di Maio will head a new ministry combining the previous departments of industry and labor. Both Salvini and Di Maio will also be deputy prime ministers.

On June 2, Salvini joined Conte and the rest of the new cabinet to view Italy's annual Republic Day parade. Afterwards, Salvini warned migrants at a rally in northern Italy: "The free ride is over. It's time to pack your bags."

A report in *al Jazeera* on June 4 noted that while visiting Pozzallo — a town on the south coast of Sicily that is one of the main arrival points for refugees — Salvini said that Sicily will no longer be what he described as "Europe's refugee camp."

A recent report in Britain's *Express* described the expected plans of Italy's new government as an act of defiance against the European Union, whose policies require migrants to be dealt with by the first country where they arrive.

In addition to their commitment to deport as many as 500,000 migrants, the governing coalition's manifesto also calls for the renegotiation of various EU treaties, including the Stability and Growth Pact, which sets a tough budget deficit limit of three percent of each nation's GDP.

The parties to which the new cabinet ministers belong also seek the cancellation of €250 billion in Italian government debt by the European Central Bank, as well as a revision of Italy's contribution to the EU budget.

The *Express* cited Salvini's statement that the deportation of illegal migrants was "a priority," and his pledge to rid the country of what he called "delinquents."

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