

## The Elders call on EU leaders to unite in compassion to migrants

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As the leaders of the European Union meet in Brussels today and tomorrow to discuss among other issues the critical question of migration, The Elders urge them to uphold the legal and moral obligation of nations to assist people fleeing persecution, conflict and hardship.

EU member states should accept the principle of burden-sharing recommended by the European Commission, even if the modalities may require adjustments.

[Kofi Annan](#), Chair of The Elders and former UN Secretary-General said:

*“Neither border closures nor higher walls will provide durable solutions to the influx of migrants into Europe. The effective management of migration will require humane policies that afford legal pathways to entry.”*

Compassion, solidarity and respect for the sanctity of life must be the guiding principles that inform the decisions of the European Union regarding migrants, whether legal or illegal. And the root causes that drive people to flee desperate circumstances must be addressed.

Fellow Elder [Martti Ahtisaari](#), former President of Finland said:

*“As a European, I have to say that the EU response so far has been woefully inadequate. EU member states can honour their obligations to refugees and still respect the economic concerns of their citizens, if they share the costs and divide the burden.”*

The Elders call on EU leaders to heed these principles as they formulate their response to the migrant crisis.

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### **About The Elders**

The Elders are independent leaders using their collective experience and influence for peace, justice and human rights worldwide. The group was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007.

The Elders are [Martti Ahtisaari](#), [Kofi Annan](#) (Chair), [Ela Bhatt](#), [Lakhdar Brahimi](#), [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) (Deputy Chair), [Fernando Henrique Cardoso](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Hina Jilani](#), [Graça Machel](#), [Mary Robinson](#) and [Ernesto Zedillo](#).

[Desmond Tutu](#) is an honorary Elder.

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### **Find out more**

For biographies of the Elders, blogs, photos, videos and more information about their work please go to [www.theElders.org](http://www.theElders.org).

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