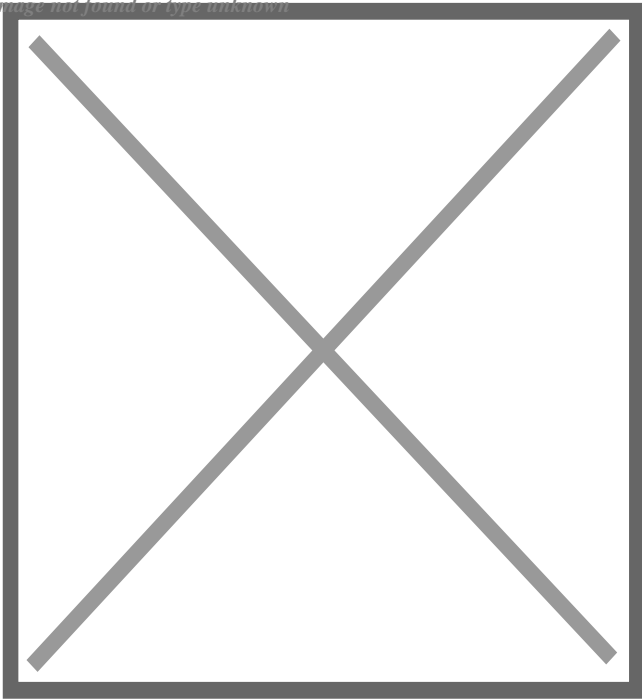


# *France and EU impose harsh new restrictions on migrants*

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Paris, December 21 (RHC)-- France's health minister tendered his resignation Wednesday to protest an anti-immigrant bill backed by President Emmanuel Macron and approved by a wide margin in the French Parliament.

The bill makes it far easier for France to expel asylum seekers, sets strict immigration quotas, makes it harder for children of immigrants to become French citizens and delays immigrants' access to welfare benefits by several years.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen has called the amended bill an "ideological victory" for her party.

In Brussels, the European Union has agreed to a New Pact on Migration and Asylum that Amnesty International warned "will set European asylum law back for decades to come and lead to greater human suffering." The agreement comes after three years of negotiations. It allows for the detention of migrant families, including those with young children, and fast-tracks the deportation of newly arrived asylum seekers.

EU Parliament Member Malin Björk said in a statement, “In the face of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU showed that solidarity with those seeking protection is possible. But instead of building on that experience, the deal just struck will institutionalize and worsen the most repressive practices: mass detention, pushbacks, and cruelty at the borders.”

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