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EU court fines Hungary €200m over its asylum policy

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Hungary Prime Minister Viktor Orbán called the fine "outrageous and unacceptable"

The European Union's top court has fined Hungary €200m (£169m) for failing to follow the union's asylum policies.

The court will also issue a penalty of €1m a day until it changes its policy.

The European Court of Justice said Budapest was in breach of a 2020 judgement that it had violated EU laws by forcing asylum seekers to travel to Belgrade or Kyiv to apply for a travel permit to enter Hungary.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, in a post on X, said the fine for "defending the borders of the European Union" was "outrageous and unacceptable" and said "it seems that illegal migrants are more important to the Brussels bureaucrats than their own European citizens".

Hungary has taken a hard line on migrants from outside the EU since more than one million people entered the country in 2015, most fleeing war in Syria. The Hungarian government erected border fences and tried to stop many from crossing.

EU **law states** that everyone fleeing persecution in their home country has the right to ask for international protection, and cannot be removed to their home if there is a serious risk of death or torture.



In a 2017 picture, a Hungarian police officer patrols the border with Serbia, where asylum seekers were detained in shipping containers.

In a press release on Thursday, the EU court said Hungary "deliberately" avoided applying EU policy and its failure "constitutes an unprecedented and extremely serious infringement of EU law".

The failure included the country unlawfully detaining people applying for international protection and not respecting their right to remain in Hungary until an appeal on their application was exhausted, the court said.

The court said Hungary's failure to follow EU laws passed responsibility on to other EU countries and undermined solidarity.

A **new EU policy** on asylum that aims to speed up the asylum process requires member countries to either take in thousands of migrants from "frontline" nations, such as Italy, Greece and Spain, or provide extra funding or resources instead.

In response, Hungary vowed not to take any irregular migrants, regardless of any pact.

Hungary will take over the rotating presidency of the EU on 1 July.

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