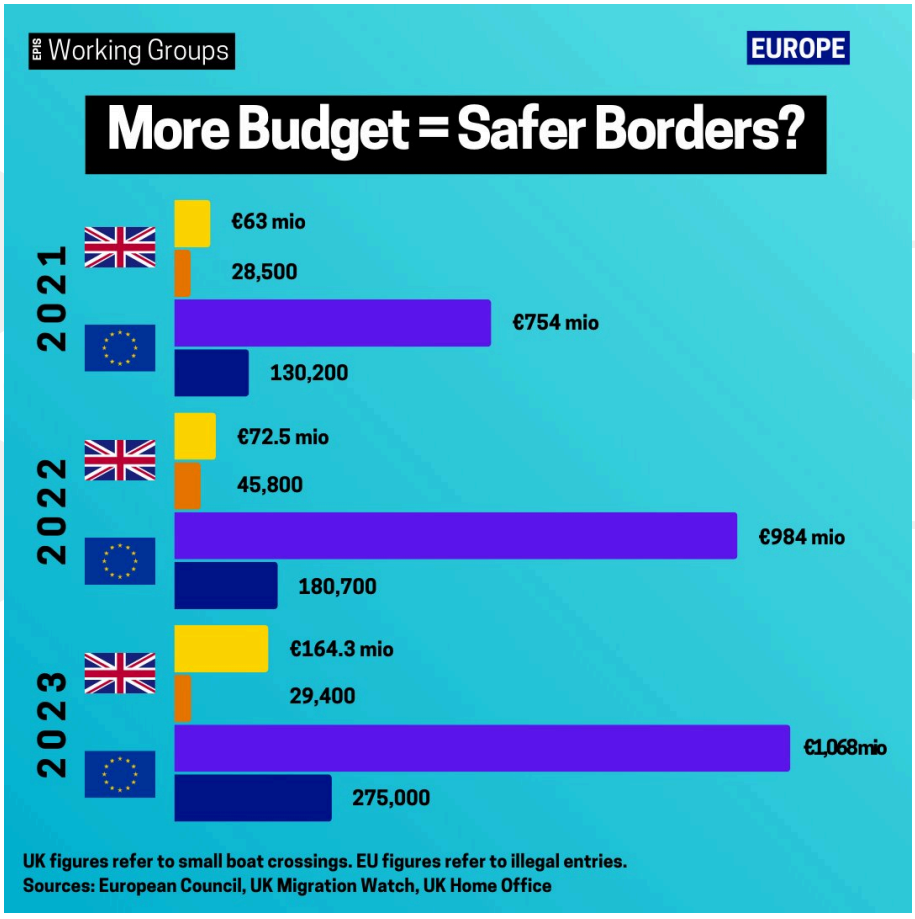
More Border Protection = Less Illegal Migration?

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An ever-increasing security expense has not curbed the arrival of migrants in Europe. As the number of migrants has risen drastically in the last 20 years, all states in the old continent have constantly increased border patrol spending. However, erecting fences and funding border patrol has not curbed, let alone stopped, the migratory flow.

Closing doors is an everyday habit. We exit our house, we close the door to prevent others from getting in. The concept of using a physical blockage is so common in our daily lives that we naturally associate doors, gates, and

fences as the most effective way to stop outsiders from entering a place where they do not belong.

In the 2000s governments had to manage the increasing migratory phenomena; as per human instinct, they started to erect fences, to expand border and sea patrol. All in an effort to 'close the door' to keep the outsiders from entering Europe.

The EU's agencies to control migration; FRONTEX and EU-LISA have seen a doubling of resources between 2020 and 2022, going from 500 million euros to over 1 billion euros. The 2021-2027 MFF assigns 22.7 billion to migration and border management.

The UK border and asylum system's cost grew from 2.3 billion in 2016 to 3.3 billion in 2021. Its bilateral agreements with France grew from 12 million in 2014 to 209 million in 2025.

Meanwhile, Turkey has built hundreds of kilometres of walls and barbed wire on its borders with Syria and Iran. The rationale is clear, more money, more walls, fewer people. But has it worked?

If we look at illegal crossings to the EU, maybe. Crossings have not exploded, and 2015-2016 apart, they remain in the 150k-200k per year. However, the current approach failed to actively decrease arrivals, and in 2022 they stood at 331k. Whether to consider this a success or not depends on our positionality. If the goal was to stop altogether arrivals, it had glamorously failed. If the purpose was to calm and reassure the public opinion, failure is also evident.

Despite the increase in budgets for border patrols, fears of migration have not gone down. In 2024 the EU parliament's saw an increase in seats for parties with fascist rhetoric towards migrants; while the UK saw the rise of Nigel Farage in the last election. European citizens' fear of migration has not been calmed by an increase in spending.

Spending more on border security has not curbed migration, and has neither convinced the public opinion. Therefore, is our money best spent building fences, or should we change our approach?

It's important to talk about migration and ways to manage it because both in Brussels and London parliaments have been adjourned. New executives will bring about change, especially with VDL's hint to a MED commissioner, migration will keep being a priority. Whether this change will go in the direction of increased expenditure on securitisation, or new approaches will be sought, hinges upon the will of people and politicians to maintain the status quo, or to work towards new long-lasting solutions.