



# Speech by Federal Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Marrakech on 10 December 2018

**Speaker:**

Angela Merkel

**Date:**

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**Location:**

Marrakesch

Conference President Foreign Minister Bourita,  
Secretary-General,  
President of the General Assembly Maria Espinosa,  
Special Representative for International Migration Louise Arbour,  
Presidents,  
Colleagues,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you in Marrakech today. I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Moroccan hosts, as well as to the United Nations and to everyone else who has made this conference possible.

Today is a very important day. For we are adopting a comprehensive political agreement on migration at global level for the first time. The United Nations General Assembly was right to focus on two issues in 2016 – on the one hand the topic of refugees, the legal basis of which is the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and on the other hand the topic of migration, an issue affecting millions of people throughout our world. A clear distinction has been made here between refugees and migration, which is particularly significant. That is why two Compacts have been drawn up as a result. And both are to be adopted by the General Assembly before the end of December.

Today, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly, it is particularly appropriate that we are also considering the fate of the many millions of migrants across the globe and reiterating our conviction that universal human rights apply to every individual in every country of the earth.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are adopting this Compact, which expressly states that its focus is on safe, orderly and regular migration. The very title of the Compact therefore describes its goal very specifically. It has become clear, and it also makes sense that this goal can only be achieved through multilateral cooperation. We could therefore say that 70 years after adoption of the International Bill of Human Rights it is high time that we also turned our joint attention to the issue of migration. Migration is a natural and frequent occurrence, and it is a good thing when it takes place legally.

Germany is a member of the European Union. Within the European Union we enjoy freedom of movement for the purposes of taking up employment. That is one aspect of our single market, and it brings us greater prosperity. That is why labour migration within the European Union is clearly regulated, also reflecting the principles of this Compact. It is all about equal pay for the same work. It is about reasonable standards. All this is something we take for granted within the European Union.

Due to its demographic development, Germany is a country that in future will continue to require higher numbers of qualified experts, including more experts from countries outside the European Union. We therefore have an interest in legal migration. And what is in our interests is also subject to our sovereign right to self-determination. The Compact states specifically that the Member States have the sovereign right to determine their own policies. At the same time, the Compact is not legally binding. So we will be reliant on legal migration as far as qualified experts are concerned and will need to talk to other countries about what is in our interests.

Nonetheless, we are aware that even within the context of legal migration as it exists in the world today, some people are exposed to extremely unfair working conditions. Child labour is still a reality. Dire working conditions are a reality. The Compact tackles these issues. And rightly so.

The Compact is also expressly intended to prevent and counter illegal migration. It expresses the commitment to border management. It expresses the commitment to fighting human trafficking. It expresses the conviction that every individual should have adequate documentation. And it raises the issue of the readmission of nationals residing illegally in another state.

We are all aware of the risks to which people who fall into the hands of human traffickers and smugglers are exposed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Organization for Migration, which will play a major role in connection with the implementation of this Compact, for its work, which it performs in many countries and which prevents many people from suffering an even worse fate.

We cannot allow human traffickers and smugglers to decide on whether someone from one country should enter another, robbing poor people of their money in the process. Ultimately, this money is then used for drug trafficking or the purchasing of weapons, which in turn makes these countries even more unsafe. Our goal must be for states themselves to regulate migration issues legally. It is crucial that we join forces to fight illegal migration in the interests of our citizens. It must be clear to everyone that states acting single-handedly will not be able to resolve this problem, but that it must be tackled through multilateral cooperation, and that this is indeed the only way to do so.

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Morocco specifically for the great responsibility it has assumed for migration issues within the African Union. For the partnership between Europe and Africa is crucially important in implementing the goals of this Compact.

We all know that we will only be able to tackle illegal migration if all countries in the world have opportunities for development. That is why the Compact goes hand in hand with implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It has already been said here today that if the goals in the areas of education, health, security and nutrition are not achieved, neither will we manage to get to grips with illegal migration and truly put a stop to it. That means that the development and implementation of this Compact and its content are inextricably linked. And all countries of the world need to have fair development opportunities if we are to shape globalisation humanely.

Now we all know that illegal migration due to the unequal development opportunities in the world sparks considerable fear in our countries in some quarters. These fears are exploited by opponents of the Compact to spread false rumours. But in essence, all discussion of this Compact and whether or not it is the right approach centres around the principle of multilateral cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is worth reminding ourselves that the United Nations was founded as a result of the Second World War. As German Chancellor, I stand here as a representative of a country that brought immeasurable suffering on humanity as a consequence of National Socialism. The response to pure nationalism was the establishment of the United Nations and a commitment to work together to resolve the issues that concern us. All debate surrounding this Compact – and that is why I made a very deliberate decision to come to Morocco today – concerns the very foundation of our international cooperation, no more and no less.

That is why it is worth fighting for this Compact – both because of the many people who will thereby be able to have a better life, and because of its clear commitment to multilateralism. This is the only way that we will be able to make our world a better place. Germany is committed to this task. We have held intensive discussions in our parliament. There was a large parliamentary majority in favour of supporting this Compact. Germany will continue to play an active role in its further implementation for the benefit of the people on our planet.

Thank you very much.

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