# Immigrants, EU Turning Point: Albania Becomes the Model

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The Italian government has announced its intention to transform the immigrant hotspots of Shengjin and Gjader into **Repatriation Detention Centers (CPR)**. The **Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi**, stated: «The transformation into CPR will be done without losing the original function». According to Piantedosi, this move has already led to a 35% increase in repatriations compared to the previous year.

## Von der Leyen: from Solidarity to Borders

The new European course on migration reflects a profound change in the political narrative of the European Commission, led by Ursula von der Leyen. If in 2020 the president spoke of immigration as a phenomenon that “has enriched our societies,” today her message is radically different: **“We decide who enters Europe, not the traffickers”**.

This phrase, pronounced at the European People's Party (EPP) Congress in Bucharest, marks the shift from an approach based on **solidarity among member states** to a **purely security-oriented and conservative vision**, aligned with the positions of EPP President Manfred Weber and several center-right governments.

Von der Leyen, now also the Spitzenkandidatin of the EPP for the European elections in June, has adopted a hard line focused on strengthening **external borders**, **outsourcing asylum procedures** to “safe” third countries, and combating traffickers. In her latest statements, **there is no longer any trace** of solidarity among member states.

The EPP manifesto, which proposes a radical change in European asylum legislation, explicitly provides that those seeking international protection can be transferred to a third state, which will handle the procedure. A shift in line with the so-called “Rwanda model” and in stark contrast to the original spirit of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum.

## Operational and Financial Details of the Centers in Albania for Immigrants

The Albanian centers will host male immigrants, adults, and in good health, coming from countries considered "safe", for whom accelerated procedures will be initiated. The facilities include a CPR with 144 places, an asylum seekers' center with 880 places, and a penitentiary. The estimated cost is about 200 million euros annually for five years, a figure that the Ministry of the Interior claims is lower than the costs of traditional reception.

## Decrease in Landings and Future Prospects

The data shows a decrease in landings: -17% compared to 2024 and -58% compared to 2023. The government attributes this decline to the deterrent effect of the protocol with Albania. Moreover, with the new European course, Italy is positioning itself as a reference and precursor of an “external” migration management, increasingly favored by Brussels.

**News link:** https://www.eunews.it/en/2024/03/07/from-asylum-pact-to-border-pact-von-der-leyens-change-of-narrative-on-migration/