

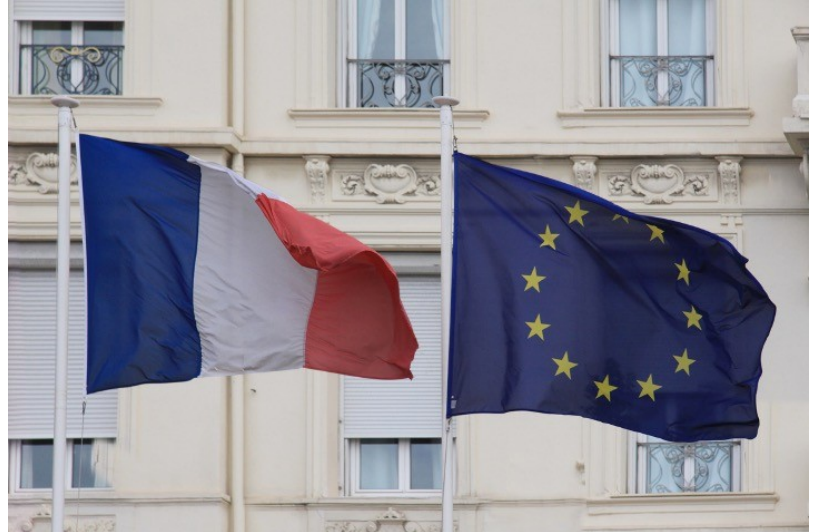


Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on March 15, 2023

French Senator Tried in Court for Anti-Illegal Immigration Post

SINGAPORE — A French lawmaker who published a post on his Facebook page earlier this year claiming that “immigration kills the youth of France” appeared in a criminal court this week for those words.

Senator Stéphane Ravier, a former Rassemblement National (RN) politician who joined Eric Zemmour’s Reconquête last year, appeared on March 9 before the criminal court of Marseilles, facing charges of incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence for his social media post alone, based on reports by the newspaper *La Provence*. His trial indicates the limitations on freedom of expression in France.



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The senator’s case can be traced back to January 11, 2022, when, following news about the murder of a teenage boy from Paris at the hands of a 62-year-old Senegalese national, he posted: “Theo, 18-years-old, was murdered yesterday by a Senegalese [migrant]... Immigration kills the youth of France.” The lawmaker’s words accompanied a photo of what seemed to be the victim at his workplace.

In response to those remarks, a complaint was filed by two “anti-hate” organizations, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) and the League for Human Rights (LDH), claiming that Ravier’s speech had worked to spread hatred toward migrants.

Alain Lothe, who is a civil party in the case, stated that via the publishing of his post to social media, “the elected official is not content to react to a news event but wants to highlight the nationality of its author and to involve all people from immigrant backgrounds.”

Notably, Ravier’s comments had previously landed him in hot water. In May 2021, the Marseille criminal court imposed a €1,500 fine on the then-RN parliamentarian after arresting him for a “sexist public insult” against the then-deputy mayor of Marseille, Samia Ghali of the Socialist Party (PS).

Ravier’s trial comes amid ongoing efforts by some European countries to demand more stringent asylum laws and a more balanced framework to curtail illegal immigration.

A [joint statement](#) was put forth by seven European countries asking for “structural reforms” of the Dublin Regulation on Wednesday, March 8.

The present framework needs reforms “with the aim of reducing irregular flows, fostering quick asylum decisions and returns and providing for a much stronger and balanced responsibility and solidarity system,” the document stated.

Six European Union (EU) member states (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands), as well as the Swiss Confederation — all signatories of the [Dublin Regulation](#) — unveiled the joint statement. According to the Dublin system, asylum claims have to be evaluated in the first



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country that migrants arrive in.

The main issue for these countries is that the Dublin system does not function as intended, as asylum seekers often travel further into Europe to the more economically developed member states to apply for asylum there. Thus, imbalances emerge among EU members, and those with the highest number of refugees are now seeking to reinforce the Dublin framework's shared responsibility aspect.

"The implementation of the Dublin rules has, especially in the context of increased arrivals to the Schengen area ... become more and more complex and consequently inefficient in practice," the statement said. Participants concurred that the enforcement gap results in not only the Dublin signatories spending considerable resources and efforts implementing EU law, but also asylum seekers not having a clear picture about their individual rights, obligations, and statuses. Eventually, such a situation risks undermining public trust in European solutions, asserted the statement, published just prior to the [EU Council meeting](#) involving the bloc's home affairs ministers on Thursday, March 9.

The aforementioned meeting's primary agenda was discussing the nuts and bolts of the EU's proposed new Immigration and Asylum Pact, which will also have to tackle the purported flaws of the Dublin system.

As migration is becoming an increasingly vital question, EU officials are under pressure to find agreement on the Asylum Pact as soon as possible for it to be enforced before next May's European elections. There is a "strong commitment from almost all ministers to adopt the whole pact before the end of this mandate," Ylva Johansson, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, remarked after the meeting.

Johansson also said that the commission is ready to unveil its "integrated border management strategy," which hopes to tackle the key issues that make it possible for asylum seekers to file protection applications in more than one country.

Across the bloc, EU countries have been grappling with the increased flow of illegal and irregular migration. In addition to Ukrainian refugees, the European Union registered almost one million new asylum applications last year, one-fifth of which were filed by people coming from countries with visa-free status, which Johansson described as an "abuse of the system."

The general agreement among EU members that these challenges must be faced seems to be stronger than ever. Last month, France and Italy started to explore North African partnerships to combat illegal migration through the Mediterranean; Sweden has been exploring ways to foster migrants' ["voluntary return"](#) to their home countries; and even the European Commission has agreed to bankroll border fences and other protective barriers along the EU's external boundaries.

In January this year, Austrian Minister for Integration Susanne Raab (ÖVP), who also is the minister for women, family, and youth, admitted in an interview with the Austria Press Agency (APA) that the EU's asylum system is broken and urged for its reform. Raab called for, among other things, a common European asylum system, the news portal MeinBezirk reported.

The increasing number of asylum seekers poses "a major challenge for integration structures, which are certainly at their limits," Raab told the news agency, elaborating that the fact that Austria, along with a few other western European countries, has to deal with the highest number of asylum seekers in the EU was "neither fair nor right."

"It is not acceptable that refugees can choose their destination countries and that currently, Austria is



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the main burden,” the minister continued.

The European Union “finally needs a common asylum system with effective external border protection,” she stated, arguing that it was intolerable that asylum seekers and migrants can “choose their destination countries,” putting a disproportionate burden on the Austrian state and its taxpayers.

The conservative, anti-globalist Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) — which according to recent surveys has more popular support than the ÖVP and Green Alternative party combined — lambasted Raab’s statements. Hannes Amesbauer, a member of the National Council, Austria’s lower house of Parliament, decried Raab’s conclusions, saying: “One has to ask whether she is in the right place in her office.”

Amesbauer argued that since asylum provides “temporary protection,” those who are able to return to their homelands should do so.

The FPÖ’s position, which per polling data clearly resonates with the population, holds that massive numbers of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants cannot be properly integrated and should return to their countries of origin instead.

To learn more about the related immigration crisis here in America and what to do about it, [click here](#).



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