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Immigration: implications for a collapse of European identity



You probably don't need further information: figures or heartbreak on the issues of mass migration into Europe by sea and land, and if you do, you won't get any here.

The political backlash has been lengthy and disparate; constant Franco-British wrangles over who is responsible for whom and why?

What about the terrible jeopardy for the trafficked, for the perils of negotiating the Med in deeply unstable packed out life-threatening dinghies? We've seen the horrors and argued the point interminably.

I remember a jolly evening some 20 years ago when some wag suggested a massive international exchange programme. You empty your prisons; we'll vacate ours - for specified crimes, obviously - and bingo!

Just like the great old days of what we called "The French Exchange", which not only bumped up your prospects for passing foreign language exams but, in two cases I know, resulted in happy marriages.

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Obviously, today's itinerant youth look further occidentally or orientally these days, skimming the landmarks of Europe - apart from the occasional session working in a bar on a Mediterranean island They seek temples, pagodas and kangaroos.

It's frankly bizarre that, simply by an accident of birth and an enormous global population, you could end up privileged, downtrodden, the victim of slavery. Or dead.

Most political pundits would place immigration - or more tacitly - "illegal immigration" on top of their voting agendas in

the UK.

Politicians likewise, given that a General Election is one and a half year's away, and has spanned the premierships of no fewer than five British prime ministers.

Fortunately for the deposed ones, the general public had no say on the matter, but it is never far from the headlines.

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You can't deny there has been a variety of attempts to keep the illegals out and pay lip service to keeping the legals in.

The UK likes to trumpet its multiculturalist approach to immigration: enriching and diversifying our European culture; detractors argue it is simply "ghettoisation" with harmful prospects.

Our major neighbour France, on the other hand, embraces a franco-français principle: anyone can be French provided they speak and live like a French person. You might like to ask a Turk what it's like living in Germany.

I think we know how those scenarios have panned out...

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The UK solutions have been chequered. We began with a proposed deal to extradite immigrants to Rwanda, which has offered to charge costs to process applications from

people who have arrived, legally or not, in the a UK.

The government's application has been rejected by the UK High Court on several occasions.

Option number 3 is accommodation on what is described as a "well-fitted barge moored off the south coast of England", but frankly more resembles the prisoner transportation vessels described by Dickens in Great Expectations.

I fear for their hopes and expectations. I fear for an influx of crime, poverty and human slavery. I fear the next generation will never know the Europe of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment.

And I fear this will never become anything beyond a political football bouncing around the lowest echelons of the lowest league.