

MEPs give go-ahead to relocate an additional 120,000 asylum seekers in the EU

Plenary sessions [17-09-2015 - 11:04]

An emergency proposal to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers from Italy, Greece and Hungary among EU member states was backed by Parliament on Thursday. The first temporary emergency rules for relocating an initial 40,000 over two years from Italy and Greece only were approved by Parliament on 9 September.

Parliament's backing in record time of the European Commission's 9 September proposal to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers sends a clear signal to EU home affairs ministers, who meet again on Tuesday 22 September, that it is high time to act and finally agree on this second emergency scheme.

Under the Commission proposal, additional 120,000 asylum seekers would be relocated from Italy (15,600), Greece (50,400) and Hungary (54,000). This number comes on top of the initial scheme to relocate [40,000 asylum seekers, approved by Parliament on 9 September](#) and endorsed by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 14 September. The total number of people to be relocated is thus 160,000.

Parliament backed the Commission's proposal (without amending it) by 370 votes to 134, with 52 abstentions. It then approved a legislative resolution by 372 votes to 124, with 54 abstentions, informing the Council that this approval is without prejudice to the position it will subsequently take on the proposal establishing a permanent crisis relocation mechanism, on which Parliament will co-decide on an equal footing with the member states.

Hungary opposing relocation

In the plenary debate on Wednesday, Luxembourg's Minister for Immigration and Asylum, Jean Asselborn, speaking on behalf of the Council's presidency, informed Parliament that "there will be an important change to the initial proposal: Hungary does not consider itself to be a frontline country and it does not want to benefit from the relocation scheme. The European Parliament needs to take this into account when giving its opinion", he said.

Parliament backs mandatory distribution

The [proposed mandatory scheme](#) would allocate asylum seekers to member states according to their capacity to absorb them, to be calculated using the following weightings: population size 40%, GDP 40%, average number of past asylum applications 10% and unemployment rate 10% (see proposed [allocation per member state](#)).

Member states participating in the scheme would get €6,000 per relocated person, including a 50% pre-financing rate to enable national authorities to act very swiftly. The countries from whose territory the asylum seekers would be transferred from would receive €500 for each person relocated, to cover transport costs.

Temporary solidarity clause

The proposal foresees that if – for justified and objective reasons, such as a natural disaster – a member state is temporarily unable to participate, it would have to make a financial contribution to the EU budget of up to 0.002% of its GDP. It would be up to the Commission to assess the reasons notified by the country and decide on whether they would justify its non-participation in the scheme for a maximum of up to 12 months.

Press release

Debate: MEPs deplore member states' failure to act and call for solidarity

The failure so far of EU home affairs ministers to agree on how to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers was severely criticised by a large majority of MEPs during Wednesday's plenary debate on the outcome of Monday's Council meeting. Most called on member states to stand together, take urgent action to tackle the current crisis, and build a European asylum and migration system that will work in the long term.

Before the vote, President Schulz announced that he would send a letter to the current Council President Xavier Bettel asking on behalf of Parliament for EU funds to be released immediately to help countries hosting the lion's share of the Syrian refugees, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

Procedure: Consultation

Further information

- Adopted text will be available here (click on 17.09.2015)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 16.09.2015)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Twitter wrap-up of the debate
:
<https://twitter.com/search?f=tweets&vertical=news&q=%40europarlpress%20%23EPonMigration&src=tyd>
- Audiovisual material for media:
<http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Package.aspx?id=27717&asset=V&type=L>

Political groups

- Press releases by the EPP Group: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press>
- Press releases by the S&D Group: <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom>
- Press releases by the ECR Group: <http://ecrgroup.eu/news/>
- Press releases by the ALDE Group: <http://www.alde.eu/press/press-and-release-news/>
- Press releases by the GUE/NGL Group: <http://www.guengl.eu/news/archives/category/gue-ngl-news>
- Press releases by the Greens/EFA Group: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/press/70-press-releases.html>
- Press releases by the EFDD Group: <http://www.efddgroup.eu/newsroom/press-releases>

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