Resolution on EU and Member State measures to tackle the flow of refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria

2013/2837(RSP) - 09/10/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on EU and Member State measures to tackle the flow of refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria.

Members recalled that up to 20 September 2013, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered a total of 1 929 227 Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and in North Africa. They stressed that the total number of refugees, including those unregistered, was estimated **at 2 102 582** and that according to the same sources, 76 % of the Syrian refugee population were women and children. Refugees were present in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Libya.

Members noted that asylum claims in the EU from Syrians had continued to increase in 2013, with a total of 52 037 asylum claims having been made since the beginning of the conflict in 2011 in the EU and its closest neighbours (Switzerland and Norway).

In this context, they encouraged Member States to **address acute needs through resettlement in addition to existing national quotas and through humanitarian admission.**

They called for the international community, the EU and Member States to continue providing support in response to this exceptional humanitarian crisis and to commit themselves to providing **effective assistance to Syria's neighbouring countries**.

Humanitarian conference: Members called for the EU to convene a humanitarian conference on the Syrian refugee crisis, with priority being given to actions directed at host countries in the region (in particular Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq) in order to support them in their effort to host ever-growing refugee populations and maintain an open-door policy. They added that such a conference should involve **all EU institutions and civil society organisations** and focus on humanitarian efforts and on strengthening the EU's role and involvement in the diplomatic efforts to help end the conflict in Syria.

International protection: Parliament called on Member States to explore all existing EU law and procedures for **providing safe entry into the EU in order to temporarily admit Syrians fleeing the country.** It noted that legal entry into the EU is preferable to more dangerous irregular entry, which could entail human trafficking risks.

In this regard, Members noted that some of the Member States had granted Syrians either permanent residency (e.g. Sweden) or temporary admission (e.g. Germany). They also reminded Member States that Syrians fleeing the conflict who were seeking international protection should be referred to competent national asylum authorities and have **access to fair and efficient asylum procedures.**

Emergency measures: Parliament called for the EU to take appropriate, responsible measures regarding a possible influx of refugees into its Member States. It asked the Commission and Member States to continue monitoring the current situation and to work on contingency planning, including the possibility of applying the Temporary Protection Directive, if and when conditions demanded it.

In order to comply with obligations to come to the assistance of migrants at sea, Parliament called on Member States that had failed to abide by their international obligations to **stop turning back boats** with migrants on board. Member States were asked respect the **principle of non-refoulement**, in compliance with existing international and EU law.