Resolution on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration

2014/2907(RSP) - 17/12/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by a resolution tabled by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration. It recalled that **in the first nine months of 2014 at least 3072 persons died in the Mediterranean sea** according to the International Organisation for Migration, and the Mare Nostrum' rescue and surveillance operation launched by Italy (but about to be phased out) had during 364 days **rescued 150 810 migrants**. Members regretted the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean and urged the European Union and the Member States to do everything possible to prevent further loss of life at sea. They were aware that **search and rescue obligations must be effectively fulfilled and properly funded**. Furthermore, the joint operation 'Triton' coordinated by Frontex became fully operational on 1 November 2014 but it was unclear as to what contributions would be made by Member States in the future.

Solidarity: Parliament reiterated the need for the EU to step up fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity towards Member States which received the highest numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in either absolute or proportional terms. Member States were to make sufficient contributions to FRONTEX and EASO's budgets and operations.

Sanctions against traffickers: Members added that Member States should lay down strong criminal sanctions against human trafficking and smuggling both into and across the EU, and also against individuals or groups exploiting vulnerable migrants in the EU, and set up wide-ranging information campaigns to raise awareness of the kinds of risks faced by those who put their lives into the hands of smugglers and those who are the victims of human trafficking.

Migration management: the overall strategy on cooperation with third countries, including Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, should be re-examined as regards humanitarian, financial and political assistance, including in the field of law enforcement. Parliament also sought clarification on the role of regional protection, resettlement and returns policies, including migration management agreements of both countries of origin and transit countries, in order to address the root causes of migration. It stressed the need for third countries to respect international law with regard to saving lives at sea, and to ensure the protection of refugees and respect for fundamental rights. It wanted consideration for the possibility of swift processing in collaboration with third countries of transit and origin and of return for those who do not qualify for asylum and protection in the EU.

Common European Asylum System: Members expressed concern about how to ensure an effective implementation of the CEAS - including the launching of the Mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis-management or by infringement procedures where EU legislation is not properly implemented - and how to guarantee effective common standards for reception, procedures and qualification throughout the EU protecting the most vulnerable and encouraging the social inclusion of refugees.

Legal migration: Parliament felt that further avenues of legal migration should be explored.

Lastly, Parliament instructed its competent committee to assess the various policies at stake, with additional resources such as resources for conducting hearings and ad hoc delegations, develop a set of recommendations and to report to Plenary in the form of a strategic initiative report before the end of 2015.