

Provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece: relocation of applicants

2016/0089(NLE) - 18/07/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Ska KELLER (Greens/EFA, DE) on the proposal for a Council decision amending Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece.

The committee approved the Commission proposal subject to the following amendments:

Scope: Members noted that relocation pursuant to this Decision shall be applied only in respect of applicants with **Syrian, Iraqi, Eritrean or Afghan** nationality or in respect of those belonging to a nationality for which the proportion of decisions granting international protection among decisions taken at first instance on applications for international protection is 75 % or higher.

They stressed that according to recent data by the UNHCR, 53 859 persons in search for international protection currently remain in Greece, the vast majority of them are Syrians (45 %), Iraqis (22 %) and Afghans (21 %).

Relocation of applicants in the Member States: Members are opposed to the Commission proposal according to which, 54 000 out of 120 000 applications shall now be allocated to the relocation of Syrians in the EU, from Turkey. This amendment to Council Decision 2015/1601 enables Member States to subtract from their allocated number of relocated applicants the number of Syrians present in Turkey admitted to their territory through resettlement.

In the recitals, Members stressed that **resettlement should not take place at the expense of relocation**. Both are important instruments of solidarity. Relocation is a form of internal solidarity among Member States, while resettlement and humanitarian admission or other kinds of admission are a form of external solidarity with third countries hosting the majority of refugees. Relocation shall not include the resettlement or admission of persons in need of international protection from a third country to the territory of a Member State.

Members stated that the 1:1 scheme which was the result of the Agreement with Turkey should be implemented with the aim of **protecting Syrians fleeing war and persecution** and in full respect for the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in Union law, in the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and in the Protocol thereto of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees.

Relocation procedure: Members proposed that Member States shall make available at least one third of their relocation places by 31 December 2016. They added that if the Member State of relocation does not approve the relocation within two weeks, that Member State shall be considered to have given its approval.

It should be the duty of the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency** to keep under constant review the situation regarding massive inflows of third-country nationals into Member States.

Members stated that to date, **only a minimal number of Syrian refugees have been resettled** to the Union. In its [resolution of 12 April 2016](#), the European Parliament called for the development of a greater number of safer and lawful routes for asylum seekers and refugees into the Union, including a **binding and mandatory** Union legislative approach to resettlement, the establishment of humanitarian admission programmes by all Member States and more extensive use of humanitarian visas.