

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

2016/0089(NLE) - 15/09/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 470 votes to 31 with 50 abstentions, a resolution on the proposal for a Council decision amending [Council Decision \(EU\) 2015/1601](#) establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece.

Parliament approved the Commission proposal subject to the following amendments:

Relocation of refugees in EU Member States: Parliament was opposed to the Commission proposal according to which, out of 120 000 applicants that must be relocated from Italy and Greece to other Member States, **54000** shall now be allocated to the relocation of Syrians in the EU, from Turkey in accordance with the EU-Turkey Agreement on migration. The Commission proposal **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.

Scope of the Decision: Parliament specified that applicants of **Syrian, Iraqi, Eritrean or Afghan** nationality must be eligible for resettlement in the EU. 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 procedure: while recalling that in its [resolution of 12 April 2016, on](#) the situation in the Mediterranean, Parliament called for a holistic EU approach to migration, Members noted that **only a minimal number of Syrian refugees have been resettled to the Union**. To date, Member States have made available just 7 % of the relocation places. Until 5 June 2016 only 793 persons from Italy and 2033 persons from Greece were effectively relocated.

Bearing this in mind, Parliament proposed that Member States shall **make available at least one third of their relocation places by 31 December 2016**. It added that if the Member State of relocation does not approve the relocation within two weeks, that Member State should 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.