Resolution on making relocation happen

2017/2685(RSP) - 18/05/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 398 votes to 134 with 41 abstentions a resolution on making relocation happen.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, GUE / NGL and Greens/EFA groups.

Members recalled that the Member States had undertaken to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece. However, as of 27 April 2017, only 17,903 asylum seekers had been relocated from Greece and Italy, i.e. 11% of the total requirement.

Members pointed out that only asylum seekers who were already in Greece before 20 March 2016 are actually considered eligible for relocation.

They also pointed out that only asylum seekers belonging to a nationality for which the average recognition rate is 75% or higher can be relocated. Iraqis are no longer eligible for relocation because they no longer meet this criterion. They also indicated that Afghans are the second largest group of asylum seekers in the EU with an asylum recognition rate of 56.7%.

In its 8th report on relocation and resettlement, the Commission has also set a monthly target for the relocation of 3,000 asylum seekers from Greece and 1,500 asylum seekers from Italy (as of 1 April 2017). Despite some progress, only Finland and Malta are on track to meet their relocation obligations.

Members recalled that legally the relocation measures do not absolve Member States from fully implementing the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin) relating to family reunification and the special protection of unaccompanied minors and the discretionary clause concerning humanitarian grounds.

In this context, Members called on the Member States to respect their obligations under Council decisions and to systematically relocate asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, including those who have arrived after 20 March 2016.

They called on Member States to give priority to the relocation of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable applicants.

They pointed out that the Commission has undertaken to make use of the prerogatives conferred on it by the Treaties if the Member States do not rapidly relocate more people.

Lastly, Members called on the Commission to propose the extension of the relocation measures until the recast of the Dublin Regulation has been adopted.