Migration and asylum policy: European strategy and the Union's future policy

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Adopting the report by Viviane Reding (PPE,LU) on migration and asylum policy, the European Parliament calls on the Council to assume, without delay, collective responsibilty for relieving the critical situation of the displaced persons and refugees in Kosovo, FYROM and Albania, by sharing the burden of receiving refugees and by joint efforts to improve the situation of those left in the area. In the context of the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Parliament calls on the Commission to propose, without delay, a European policy on migration and asylum, with the full involvement of the Parliament. It calls on the Member States to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and their families adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18/12/90. With regard to asylum, it recalls that all Union Member States must respect the Geneva Convention and no agreement should derogate from this obligation. In the event of an application for asylum being rejected, the Parliament urges that expulsion be suspended if there are signs that the applicant's life could be at risk in his or her country of origin. It also takes the view that an asylum seeker cannot be expelled until his right to appeal has been exhausted. The report calls for priority to be given to improving the implementation of existing international conventions on asylum and asks that, if need be, those conventions be supplemented so as to adapt them to new circumstances, rather than creating new instruments. The Parliament supports the setting-up of a system of complementary protection to supplement refugee status. It rejects any attempt to replace the legal reference framework by a discretionary system based on an "institutional offer" at the discretion of each government. It calls on the Council to tak erapid action to reach consensus on the question of sharing refugees and the burden imposed by massive and sudden influxes of refugees into those Member States which accept them either for geographical or historical reasons. With regard to migrant labour, the Parliament calls on the Council to take a decision on the Commission's proposal laying down an agreement on the rules governing the admission of third-country nationals to Member States. It further calls on Member States to recognise the right of legitimate immigrants to vote in local and European elections after 5 years' residence in a Member State. With regard to illegal immigration, the Parliament calls on the Member States and the accession countries to strengthen, in association with third countries, their cooperation in administrative, police and judicial matters, in order to combat crime, while fully exploiting the potential of Europol. It stresses that, in the fight against organised illegal immigration, consideration must always be given to the right of refugees to seek protection. The report expresses the Parliament's belief that the fight against undeclared work must also aim at the employers "who give the orders". The Parliament advocates that the agreements on re-admission to crisis-torn regions be temporarily suspended and recalls that bilateral agreements on immediate re-admission of illegal immigrants concluded by Member States with neighbouring countries must take account of the suspensory effect of the asylumprocedure laid down in the Geneva Convention. Finally, it demands that the administrative and judicial procedures applicable to illegal immigrants should lead to swifter decision making in particular with a view to regularising their status.