Resolution on immigration and asylum policy

2003/2501(RSP) - 15/01/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on immigration and asylum policy. It noted that the measures that have been adopted by the Council have focused primarily on illegal immigration. There has been little or no progress on establishing a common EU migration policy or improving circumstances for legal migrants, for example through the proposed directives on family reunification and rights of long-term legal residents. Such measures should also support the aim of combating illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings, since potential migrants should no longer be tempted to resort to illegal channels. Parliament regretted that the Council had been unable to state its final position on the Commission's proposals in the area of immigration and asylum policy. It stressed the need in particular for a strategic long-term perspective on labour immigration. Parliament also regretted the delay in adopting the directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of paid employment and self-employed economic activities and the directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies. (COM (2002) 548). On the matter of asylum, Parliament welcomed the adoption of the Dublin II Regulation. It regretted the failure to adopt the proposal for a directive on minimum standards for refugees, thanks to the reservations expressed by certain Member States. On the Council's delay in adopting the Commission proposals on a common asylum policy, Parliament warned of the development whereby Member States adopt unilateral measures in the absence of common rules. It anticipated the EP/Council codecision procedure and qualified majority voting coming into force in the field of asylum, as advocated by the Convention's Working Group X. On the question of return and readmission, Parliament stated that unilateral EU action will not suffice and that cooperation with the countries of origin and transit of immigration is essential if concrete results are to be obtained. Parliament should be consulted on readmission agreements. The overriding priority must be voluntary returns. Finally, the Council was asked to consider the idea of creating a Community-financed European Border Guard Corps, which would, in an emergency and at the request of the Member States, be deployed to assist national authorities temporarily at vulnerable sections of the EU's external borders.