

Combating illegal immigration: facilitation of unauthorised entry, movement and residence.

Initiative France

2000/0821(CNS) - 15/02/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

By 242 votes against 203 and by 31 abstentions Parliament rejected the entire text of the French initiative on defining what constitutes 'aiding' of unauthorised entry, movement and residence. After all amendments by the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights had been approved with two other amendments by the ELDR group, a majority of MEPs for differing reasons decided to reject the entire text even as modified by the amendments. It proceeded to send the rejection of the French initiative on to Council by 447 votes in favour, 14 against and 16 abstentions. To recall, the report by Mr Ozan CEYHUN (Greens/ALE, D) specifies the implementation of a common immigration and asylum policy covering family reunion, the right of residence and an integration policy, as well as the combating of illegal immigration. It states that it is particularly important to lay the foundations of a common immigration and asylum policy, to establish a common asylum procedure and, in addition, to improve the legal status of refugees. It is also important to strengthen institutional cooperation between the Member States in this context. Furthermore, the report requests that the draft initiative should primarily aim to combat organised trafficking of illegal immigrants and should neither affect the rights of aliens to seek asylum in the European Union nor imply the automatic criminalisation of unauthorised entry. The report also specifies that it is necessary to involve the candidate countries in implementing common measures defined by the Union in this field. It requests in particular the creation of a budget line for compensatory payments for Member States particularly affected by illegal immigration because of their geographical situation and other characteristics. In addition, it also calls on Member States not to prosecute individuals, organisations and associations whose aims include defending, protecting and promoting aliens who are not nationals of a Member State when they act within the framework of this directive and out of humanitarian reasons. Lastly, by 411 votes in favour and 26 against with 30 abstentions Parliament then decided to send the rejection on to Council. The Council is not obliged to follow Parliament's view and is free to adopt both initiatives.