Basic information

2015/2342(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action **Subject** 6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve 7.10.06 Asylum, refugees, displaced persons; Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)	

Key players

European Parliament

Joint committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	VALENCIANO Elena (S&D)	01/02/2016
DEVE Development	DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA CONSUEGRA Agustín (PPE)	01/02/2016
	Shadow rapporteur GABRIEL Mariya (PPE) GUERRERO SALOM Enrique (S&D) LUCKE Bernd (ECR) BASHIR Amjad (ECR) VÄYRYNEN Paavo (ALDE) VAUTMANS Hilde (ALDE) ALBIOL GUZMÁN Marina (GUE/NGL) URBÁN CRESPO Miguel (GUE/NGL) LOCHBIHLER Barbara (Verts/ALE) HAUTALA Heidi (Verts/ALE) CASTALDO Fabio Massimo (EFDD) CORRAO Ignazio (EFDD) BAY Nicolas (ENF)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed

	BUDG Budgets	VIOTTI Daniele (S&D)	03/12/2015
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL)	07/09/2016

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	European External Action Service	MOGHERINI Federica

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
09/09/2015	Non-legislative basic document published	JOIN(2015)0040	Summary
21/01/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/01/2016	Referral to joint committee announced in Parliament		
31/01/2017	Vote in committee		
22/02/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0045/2017	Summary
04/04/2017	Debate in Parliament		
05/04/2017	Decision by Parliament	T8-0124/2017	Summary
05/04/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
05/04/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2015/2342(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 59 Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CJ19/8/05379

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE589.425	29/09/2016	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE592.248	20/10/2016	

Amendments tabled in committee		PE592.288	20/10/2016	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE589.455	10/11/2016	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE589.456	12/12/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0045/2017	22/02/2017	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0124/2017	05/04/2017	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2017)487	07/09/2017	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	CZ_SENATE	JOIN(2015)0040	30/09/2015	
Contribution	RO_CHAMBER	JOIN(2015)0040	08/10/2015	
Contribution	CZ_CHAMBER	JOIN(2015)0040	26/10/2015	
Contribution	CZ_SENATE	JOIN(2015)0040	27/10/2015	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	JOIN(2015)0040	10/03/2016	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
ECHR	Joint document from the Commission and the High Representative (JOIN)	JOIN(2015)0040	09/09/2015	Summary

Addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action

2015/2342(INI) - 09/09/2015 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present of a joint communication from the EU External Action Service addressing the refugee crisis in Europe.

BACKGROUND: the European Union (EU) is facing the largest refugee crisis since the end of World War II. It is a crisis of unprecedented magnitude that largely originates from conflicts and persecutions in Europe's wider neighbourhood. The violent conflicts in **Syria and Iraq** or instability and poverty in parts of Africa have forced millions of women, men and children to flee their homeland in search of protection and a decent life, including to the EU.

The EU is stepping up its response to this crisis based on the principles of solidarity and responsibility and in full respect of its values and international obligations. Since the beginning of 2015, the EU has reoriented and mobilised all its external action instruments to respond to the refugee crisis with three objectives: (i) saving lives; (ii) ensuring protection of those in need and (iii) managing borders and mobility.

In 2015, the numbers of those crossing into the European Union through what is called the Eastern Mediterranean route amount to 182,740, an enormous increase in comparison to 2014. There is an exponential increase in the number of persons seeking international protection, notably from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Irregular migrants using the Central Mediterranean route come mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa, and they often also come from conflict areas: approximately 20% are from Eritrea, 12% from Somalia, still, 10% are from Syria.

While European citizens may perceive the current migratory pressure as dramatic, the **European Union is by no means the most affected region in the world**. More than 85% of these persons live in developing countries (in particular in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey).

This shows that the current migration and refugee crisis is not only, nor principally, a European problem. It is a major international challenge. The European Union is at the forefront of international efforts aimed at addressing conflicts and instability and supporting affected populations.

It is for this reason that the External Action Service has proposed a framework for action to address the refugee crisis in Europe and offer a European response.

CONTENT: in the face of the current crisis, precedence is being given to actions that have greater immediate impact on migration flows. At the same time, long-term engagement on these matters is necessary to address root causes. The European Union aims to **strengthen political dialogue, cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience** with partner countries, civil society organisations and local authorities, in order to support human mobility as a positive element of human development. Cooperation with a rights-based approach encompassing human rights will contribute to address challenges, including South-South migration, and the situation of vulnerable migrants.

The present Communication – part of a broader package of proposals adopted by the European Commission – describes the external action by the European Union to **address the refugee crisis**.

It builds upon a triple response solid structure as follows:

1) Key financial instruments are being mobilised: with a budget allocation of EUR 96.8 billion for the 2014-2020 period, European Union external cooperation, including development cooperation worldwide, plays an important role in addressing poverty, insecurity, inequality or unemployment. In the context of the current crisis and in addition to the Syria Trust Fund, the **European Commission is also proposing to EU Member States a new European Emergency Trust Fund** for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. Trust Funds enable the EU, its Member States and contributing donors to respond to different dimensions of emergency situations by intervening jointly, flexibly and quickly, in response to changing needs. The proposed Trust Fund will support stability, promote resilience, economic development, security, and migration management.

2) Cooperation in readmission and return of irregular migrants: at present, percentages of return in EU Member States are relatively low. In 2014, less than 40% of the irregular migrants that were ordered to leave the EU departed effectively. The EU action plan on return, adopted in parallel to this Communication, addresses this area of policy.

3) Fighting organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and human trafficking: the EU is a key actor when it comes to improving partner countries' capacities on border management, and on implementing voluntary return and reintegration, taking an integrated approach which ensures borders are secure but at the same time allows swift movements of legitimate flows of people and goods. The European agenda on migration sets out a number of initiatives to strengthen EU instruments available to address smuggling networks, notably an EU action plan against migrant smuggling.

Other initiatives include the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED), EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali.

The communication presented the state of play regarding the each of the zones affected with migration flows (in particular, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, the Western Balkans and in areas of sub-Saharan).

Conclusions and way forward: in order to address the refugee crisis and manage challenges and opportunities jointly, the ability of the European Union to engage with partners in third countries will be key. The EU-Africa Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership, or the ACP-EU migration dialogue are instrumental in this regard.

Several of the challenges outlined in this Communication can and are being addressed through political and diplomatic efforts:

- renewed efforts are being devoted to address the root causes of this crisis, namely the war in Syria and Iraq. The High Representative is pursuing high-level dialogues on these issues, as requested by the European Council, leveraging the European Union's support to countries and regions and building on already existing partnerships;
- cooperation with countries of origin and transit is being conducted at bilateral level using all existing frameworks in particular those provided by mobility partnerships, the common agenda on migration and mobility or readmission agreements;
- engagement on other issues, including trade and development, will also be seized to discuss cooperation in the field of migration.

EU Delegations will also intensify contacts with local authorities. Delegations in key countries of transit and origin are being reinforced through the deployment of European Migration Liaison Officer (EULMOs), as foreseen in the European Agenda on Migration.

In addition, the European Union is organising two high-level conferences: (i) the Valletta Summit on Migration (11-12 November 2015) will discuss, inter alia, development benefits of migration, root causes, legal migration and mobility, international protection and asylum, prevention and fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings, and cooperation on return and readmission; (ii) the high-level Conference on Eastern Mediterranean/Western Balkans route (autumn 2015).

The communication concludes that comprehensively addressing these will require an approach that encompasses **short- and long-term efforts** based on instruments at the Union's disposal, from diplomacy to financial assistance.

Addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action

2015/2342(INI) - 22/02/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs Committee on Development adopted a joint own-initiative report by Agustín DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA CONSUEGRA (EPP, ES) and Elena VALENCIANO (S&D, ES) on addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action.

The report has been adopted pursuant to Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (Joint committee meetings).

Members underlined that in today's world there is an unprecedented level of human mobility. The international community must urgently undertake the strengthening of a **common response to address the challenges and opportunities that this phenomenon represents**. Given the multiple complex causes of human mobility, Members called for evidence-based decisions to differentiate its elements and develop targeted policy responses.

They considered that international migration can contribute to socioeconomic development, as it has done historically. However, **xenophobic, populist and nationalistic discourses** have to be countered. They welcomed the **'Together' campaign launched by the UN** to reduce negative perceptions and attitudes towards refugees and migrants and called on the EU institutions to fully cooperate with the UN in support of this campaign.

Members stressed that the humanitarian aid system is extremely overstretched and that its financial resources will never be sufficient to respond to forced displacement crises.

EU development cooperation should continue to address and effectively tackle the **root causes of forced displacement and migration,** namely armed conflict, persecution on any grounds, gender-based violence, bad governance, poverty, lack of economic opportunities and climate change.

Members underlined that, in line with EU principles, one overall objective of the EU's external migration policies should be to establish a **multilateral governance regime** for international migration, for which the recent UN High-Level Meeting is a first step.

Better managed international migration: a global responsibility: Members considered the recent decision by the US administration to temporarily ban citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US and to temporarily suspend the US refugee system fuels anti-immigration and xenophobic discourses. They welcomed the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants of 19 September 2016 and the hosting of the Leaders' Summit by the USA, as **migration flows are a global responsibility which demand an effective global response** and enhanced cooperation between all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable solution fully respecting human rights. They stressed that global cooperation on migration and mobility should be built upon **regional and sub-regional frameworks**. In this regard, the EU is called on to strengthen cooperation plans with regional organisations such as the African Union, League of Arab States and Gulf Cooperation Council. Members called on EU Member States to fully respect their own pledges concerning readmission agreements.

EU external action and partnerships with third countries: Members stressed that EU external action should be peace-oriented, proactive and forward-looking, instead of mainly reactive. They expressed support for closer cooperation between the EU and third countries in a number of fields to avoid new crises. They stressed the need to **put in place a comprehensive approach** to external conflict and crises by **mapping** the direct and indirect economic, environmental, social, fiscal and political impacts of displacement on third countries in order to better adjust development policies to their needs.

Towards a common migration policy: while condemning the increasing criminalisation of migration, Members called for the establishment of a **genuine, human rights-based common European migration policy** based on the principle of solidarity among Member States as enshrined in Article 80 TFEU, with the securing of the EU's external borders and adequate legal channels for safe and orderly migration. Close cooperation with NGOs and experts working in the countries of origin of asylum-seekers is essential.

Members are extremely concerned by the **continuing conflict in Syria** and called on the EU and the Member States to improve means dedicated to conflict prevention and crisis management. They expressed their full support to Syria's neighbouring countries, which continue to demonstrate extraordinary solidarity in hosting millions of refugees despite limited resources. On the other hand, they expressed regret that in the EU migration policy framework and refugee movements response, the EU and its Members States have opted for the conclusion of agreements with third countries, which **avoid the parliamentary scrutiny** attached to the Community method.

Appropriate means for action: Members acknowledged the Commission's proposal for a new and **ambitious External Investment Plan** (EIP) to mobilise investments in the EU's neighbouring countries and developing third countries. They noted that the proposed **European Fund for Sustainable Development** will be partly financed through the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) allocations, which constitutes the use of development funds to foster private sector investment.

Members underlined that the sum of EUR 3.35 billion earmarked for the new European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) as part of the EIP corresponds to over 5% of the total funds available from the EDF, DCI and European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) under the multiannual financial framework. They called on the Commission to provide more details regarding this estimation and the expected impact of these amounts.

Lastly, they noted that the creation of trust funds and *ad hoc* financial instruments, while helping to pool resources and bringing speed and flexibility to EU action, can also put at risk development effectiveness principles and undermines the unity of the budget and Parliament's budgetary authority. Parliament should be given a greater supervisory role in the use of these instruments.

Addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action

2015/2342(INI) - 05/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 333 votes to 310 with 46 abstentions, a resolution on addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action.

Parliament underlined that in today's world there is an unprecedented level of human mobility. The international community must urgently undertake the strengthening of a **common response to address the challenges and opportunities that this phenomenon represents**. Given the multiple complex causes of human mobility, it called for evidence-based decisions to differentiate its elements and develop targeted policy responses.

It considered that international migration can contribute to socioeconomic development, as it has done historically. However, **xenophobic, populist and nationalistic discourses** have to be countered. It welcomed the 'Together' campaign launched by the UN to reduce negative perceptions and attitudes towards refugees and migrants and called on the EU institutions to fully cooperate with the UN in support of this campaign.

Parliament called for increased cooperation with the UN and other actors, including increased financial contributions for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as well as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Parliament stressed that the **humanitarian aid system** is extremely overstretched and that its financial resources will never be sufficient to respond to forced displacement crises. EU development cooperation should continue to address and effectively tackle the root causes of forced displacement and migration, namely armed conflict, persecution on any grounds, gender-based violence, bad governance, poverty, lack of economic opportunities and climate change.

Parliament underlined that, in line with EU principles, one overall objective of the EU's external migration policies should be to establish a **multilateral governance regime for international migration**, for which the recent UN High-Level Meeting is a first step.

Better managed international migration: **a global responsibility**: Parliament considered the recent decision by the US administration to temporarily ban citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US and to temporarily suspend the US refugee system fuels anti-immigration and xenophobic discourses. It welcomed the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants of 19 September 2016 and the hosting of the Leaders' Summit by the USA, as migration flows are a **global responsibility which demand an effective global response and enhanced cooperation** between all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable solution fully respecting human rights. It stressed that global cooperation on migration and mobility should be built upon **regional and sub-regional frameworks**. In this regard, the EU is called on to strengthen cooperation plans with regional organisations such as the African Union, League of Arab States and Gulf Cooperation Council.

The resolution highlighted the international law obligations regarding refugees and called on all countries which have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Refugee Convention and its Protocol. It called on all countries to expand protection to internally displaced persons, as is the case in mechanisms such as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).

Parliament called on EU Member States to fully respect their own pledges concerning readmission agreements.

EU external action and partnerships with third countries: Parliament stressed that EU external action should be peace-oriented, proactive and forward-looking, instead of mainly reactive. It expressed support for closer cooperation between the EU and third countries in a number of fields to avoid new crises.

Parliament underlined that EU assistance and cooperation must be tailored to achieving development and growth in third countries – thereby also fostering growth within the EU – and to reducing and eventually eradicating poverty in line with Article 208 of the TFEU, and not to incentivising third countries to cooperate on readmission of irregular migrants, to forcibly deterring people from moving, or to stopping flows to Europe.

It recalled that both donors and the governments of aid-receiving countries must work to improve the effectiveness of aid. It noted that migration flows are an international reality and should not become an indicator of the performance of the EU's external migration policies, and that agreements with third countries need to be guided by long-term objectives and by establishing durable partnerships and the respect for human rights.

Parliament also stressed the need to **put in place a comprehensive approach** to external conflict and crises by **mapping** the direct and indirect economic, environmental, social, fiscal and political impacts of displacement on third countries in order to better adjust development policies to their needs.

Towards a common migration policy: while condemning the increasing criminalisation of migration, Parliament called for the establishment of a **genuine, human rights-based common European migration policy** based on the principle of solidarity among Member States as enshrined in Article 80 TFEU, with the securing of the EU's external borders and adequate legal channels for safe and orderly migration. Close cooperation with NGOs and experts working in the countries of origin of asylum-seekers is essential.

Parliament underlined that **partnership agreements** such as mobility partnerships should ensure that migrants can be safely received in countries of transit and origin, in a manner entirely consistent with their fundamental rights. It stressed that Parliament has a clear say in EU readmission and mobility agreements, as stated in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 79(3) TFEU), and specifically emphasised that Parliament must give its prior consent to the conclusion of association and similar agreements. It must be immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure.

Parliament is extremely concerned by the **continuing conflict in Syria** and called on the EU and the Member States to improve means dedicated to conflict prevention and crisis management. It expressed its full support to Syria's neighbouring countries, which continue to demonstrate extraordinary solidarity in hosting millions of refugees despite limited resources.

It called on the EU and its Member States to continue and step up cooperation and dialogue with Lebanon and Jordan and to increase financial support through both international organisations and European channels, as well as with other third host countries, to ensure firstly that refugee populations can enjoy decent living conditions and access to basic services, and are granted rights to free movement and work opportunities, and secondly that funds reach their final objectives.

On the other hand, it expressed regret that in the EU migration policy framework and refugee movements response, the EU and its Members States have opted for the conclusion of agreements with third countries, which **avoid the parliamentary scrutiny** attached to the Community method.

Appropriate means for action: Parliament acknowledged the Commission's proposal for a new and **ambitious External Investment Plan** (EIP) to mobilise investments in the EU's neighbouring countries and developing third countries. It noted that the proposed **European Fund for Sustainable Development** will be partly financed through the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) allocations, which constitutes the use of development funds to foster private sector investment.

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Lastly, it noted that the creation of trust funds and *ad hoc* financial instruments, while helping to pool resources and bringing speed and flexibility to EU action, can also put at risk development effectiveness principles and undermines the unity of the budget and Parliament's budgetary authority. Parliament should be given a greater supervisory role in the use of these instruments.