



Migration: Parliament calls for urgent measures to save lives

Plenary sessions [29-04-2015 - 14:31]

The EU should do everything possible to prevent further loss of life at sea, e.g. by expanding the mandate of “Triton” operation in the Mediterranean to include “search and rescue operations at EU level”, says a resolution voted by Parliament on Wednesday. MEPs also call for a binding quota for distributing asylum seekers among all EU countries, bigger contributions to resettlement programmes, better cooperation with third countries and tougher measures against people smugglers.

Parliament urges the EU and its member states to establish a clear mandate for Triton, “so as to expand its area of operation and increase its mandate for search and rescue operations at EU level” (Triton is coordinated by the EU border agency Frontex and currently extends only 30 nautical miles from the Italian coastline).

The EU and its member states should ensure that “search and rescue obligations are effectively fulfilled”, stresses the resolution, which was approved by 449 votes to 130, with 93 abstentions.

Parliament calls for “a robust and permanent humanitarian European rescue operation, which, like Mare Nostrum, would operate on the high seas and to which all member states would contribute financially and with equipment and assets”. MEPs urge the EU to co-fund such an operation.

EU countries should also continue to show solidarity and commitment by stepping up their contributions to the budgets and operations of Frontex and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), MEPs add. Parliament also undertakes to provide these agencies with the resources (human and equipment) needed to fulfil their obligations “through the EU budget and its relevant funds”.

Stepping up solidarity and responsibility-sharing among EU countries

Parliament regrets that the 23 April European Council did not pledge to set up a binding EU-wide solidarity mechanism. To respond to the latest tragedies in the Mediterranean with “solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility”, MEPs say that:

- the European Commission should establish a “binding quota” for distributing asylum seekers among all EU countries,
- member states should make full use of existing possibilities for issuing humanitarian visas and seriously consider whether to trigger the 2001 Temporary Protection Directive or Article 78(3) of the TFEU (both foresee a solidarity mechanism in the event of mass and sudden inflows of displaced persons),
- EU countries should make greater contributions to existing resettlement programmes, and
- the Common European Asylum System rules should be rapidly and fully transposed into national law and implemented by all participating member states.

Cooperating with third countries and fighting smugglers

Press release

The resolution calls for closer coordination of EU and member state policies in tackling the root causes of migration and more cooperation with partner countries in the Middle East and Africa.

It also calls for the strongest possible criminal sanctions against human trafficking and smuggling and urges member states and EU agencies to work more closely to detect and trace these criminal networks' funding and identify their *modus operandi*, so as to prevent them from making money by putting migrants' lives at risk.

Note to editors

The purpose of this resolution is to respond to the recent tragic events in the Mediterranean, to the European Council conclusions of 23 April 2015 and to propose a set of urgent measures to be taken immediately. The Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee is currently drafting a report which will reflect Parliament's medium- and longer-term policy orientations on migration.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Facts: Triton

- Joint operation coordinated by Frontex, fully operational since 1 November 2014
- Extends only 30 nautical miles from the Italian coast, i.e. not to areas where people are actually drowning
- Initial budget: €2.9 million per month, compared with over €9 million per month for Mare Nostrum
- European Council pledged on 23 April to strengthen Triton's funding and assets, but not its operating area

Further information

- Adopted text will be available here (click on 29.04.2015)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 29.04.2015)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Audiovisual material for professionals
: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/default.aspx>
- EPRS - Asylum and irregular immigration in the EU
: <http://epthinktank.eu/2015/04/23/asylum-and-irregular-immigration-in-the-eu/>

Political groups

- Press Release by EPP Group (29.04.2015)
: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-release/Migration%3A-EPP-Group-calls-for-solidarity-mechanism>
- Press Release by S&D Group (29.04.2015): <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/pittella-eu-parliament-much-further-along-governments>
- Press Release by ECR Group (29.04.2015)
: <http://136.173.159.70/newsletter/kamall-the-eu-needs-to-answer-tough-questions-to-resolve-med-disasters/>

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