

MEPs to go to Greece to check on refugees and implementation of EU-Turkey deal

[13-05-2016 - 14:43]

A Civil Liberties Committee delegation will travel to Greece from 18 to 20 May to check the situation of refugees at the external borders of the EU and assess how the EU-Turkey deal to manage migrant and asylum-seekers flows into the EU is being implemented. MEPs will visit the Greece/FYROM border, the island of Lesbos and Athens. They will also meet representatives of the Greek Government, and EU and international bodies, as well as NGOs.

The aim of the delegation, formed by 10 MEPs led by Peter Niedermüller (S&D, HU), is to evaluate the situation on the ground in order to identify possible needs and further measures to be taken, including with regard to the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal. MEPs want to check how asylum applications are being processed, the information and support that migrants are being offered and hold discussions regarding rescue operations and border management.

They will visit both open and closed reception facilities in the northern part of the country and in Lesbos. Civil Liberties Committee MEPs have repeatedly quizzed the EU Commission about the conditions in the Greek reception centres, the number and background of staff conducting asylum interviews and the return of migrants and asylum-seekers to Turkey. They are especially concerned about the situation of vulnerable groups, such as women with children and unaccompanied minors.

Delegation: Peter NIEDERMÜLLER (Head of delegation, S&D, HU), Birgit SIPPEL (S&D, DE), Mariya GABRIEL (EPP, BG), Helga STEVENS (ECR, BE), Malin BJÖRK (GUE/NGL, SE), Laura FERRARA (EFDD, IT), Roza Maria Gräfin THUN UND HOHENSTEIN (EPP, PL), Janice ATKINSON (ENF, UK), Anna Maria CORAZZA BILDIT (EPP, SE) and Elissavet VOZEMBERG-VRIONIDI (EPP, EL).

The head of the delegation will hold a press conference in Athens at 10:00, on Friday 20 May.

Media resources

Audio-visual media

Audio-visual producer on the spot

Elena Kurze

Elena.kurze@europarl.europa.eu

+32 475 730 597

Audio-visual service in Brussels

Press release

Eliana Dritsas

+32 498 98 35 76

Eliana.dritsas@europarl.europa.eu

[Web page with all audio-visual material](#) (video and photos)

Press

Press Officer

Estefanía Narrillos

Estefania.narrillos@europarl.europa.eu

+32 498 98 39 85

Twitter

https://twitter.com/EP_Justice

Social Media

Social media officer

Gianna Sventzidou

+30 69 37 22 76 79

Gianna.sventzidou@ext.europarl.europa.eu

Storify (live updates from Wednesday)

https://storify.com/europarl_en/meps-visit-greece

Twitter

https://twitter.com/Europarl_EN

https://twitter.com/Europarl_EL

Note to editors

Under the deal reached by EU heads of state and government with the Turkish authorities on 18 March, all people arriving irregularly from Turkey to the Greek islands are to be returned, while the EU is to take in one Syrian refugee for each Syrian sent back. Once irregular crossings from Turkey have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated.

According to European Commission data, the average number of daily arrivals has already significantly decreased, from around 1,600 in February to just over 100 in March. Following the EU-Turkey deal, 690 persons who arrived irregularly on the Greek islands

Press release

have been sent back to Turkey. Of the 472 asylum officers requested by the European Asylum Support Office to deal with applications in Greece, almost 100 have already been deployed.

Further information

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>
- EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016 (Council) : <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>

Contact

Estefania NARRILLOS

BXL: (+32) 2 28 31324
STR: (+33) 3 881 73661
PORT: (+32) 498 98 39 85
TWITTER: EP_Justice

Elena KURZE

PORT: (+32) 475 73 05 97