



Debates on EU approach to migration and the expulsion of migrants from Spain

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The need for a holistic EU approach to migration and concerns over the way migrants are treated in Spain were debated with the new European Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on Tuesday. This approach should provide for more solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among member states, properly fulfilled search and rescue duties, safe and legal routes for refugees into the EU and better cooperation with third countries, said MEPs.

Migration was high on Parliament's agenda on Tuesday afternoon. MEPs first debated the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration. Opening the debate, Civil Liberties Committee Chair and author of the oral questions to Commission and Council Claude Moraes (S&D, UK) stressed that more must be done to prevent further loss of life at sea. Echoing Pope Francis' speech that morning in the European Parliament, he said "We cannot allow the Mediterranean to become a vast graveyard".

MEPs debated the Common European Asylum System, stressing the need for more solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among member states. Other issues raised included refugee resettlement, "Triton" operation in the Mediterranean coordinated by EU border agency Frontex, and the need to combat smuggling and people trafficking and to improve cooperation with third countries.

A resolution will be put to a vote at the December plenary session.

Expulsion of migrants from Spain

In a separate debate, MEPs discussed planned changes to Spanish law which would enable the country to expel clandestine migrants caught entering its North African enclaves Ceuta and Melilla without providing legal or procedural safeguards for them. Most speakers questioned whether these "hot returns" are consistent with EU law and values and asked whether the Commission is planning to take any action to address the practice.

"I intend to closely monitor the situation in Ceuta and Melilla", said Commissioner Avramopoulos, adding that the Commission "is concerned" at NGO and media reports about "hot returns" of migrants in the Spanish enclaves. "Any border surveillance measure must be proportionate to the objectives pursued (...) and respect the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (...) and migrants' dignity", he stressed. The Commission is talking to Spain about the planned changes to its law and is confident that this "dialogue will produce results", he said.

You can watch the recording of the two debates via [EP Live](#)

Press release

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