



European Council: Civil Liberties Committee Chair regrets lack of commitment by EU leaders on the number of refugees to resettle

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Reacting to the final statement of the European Council held yesterday in Brussels, the Chair of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee responsible for dealing with migration, Claude Moraes (S&D, UK), welcomed the setting up of a voluntary resettlement scheme to those qualifying for protection, but regretted the lack of commitment by EU leaders on the number of refugees to resettle. "Bolder pledges should have been made" at the summit, he said.

Statement by the Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee, Claude Moraes:

"Last night's summit was an opportunity to have in place a bold, compassionate plan in response to the crisis in the Mediterranean. That chance was missed.

The commitment to set up a voluntary resettlement scheme to those qualifying for protection is absolutely welcome. However, there is no mention of the numbers they will commit to resettle, not even the low figure of 5000 that was mentioned in leaked Council documents ahead of the summit.

Triton will have its funding tripled, similar to the levels of funding that the now disbanded Mare Nostrum had. There is no mention however, of increasing the operational area of Triton.

Part of Mare Nostrum's success and ability to save thousands of lives at sea, was due to the vast area that it covered - the full Straits of Sicily and even international waters. If Triton continues to only cover the first 30 miles of the Italian coastline, they will simply not be covering the area where deaths actually occur.

Whilst I welcome the steps that have been taken at the summit, bolder pledges should have been made. Concentrating on smuggling routes and working with third countries is important but we need to ensure that we don't solely focus on enforcement.

We need compassionate policies to assist migrants and establish, credible, legal routes of entry into the EU, reducing the need for people to turn to smugglers in the first place.

The Civil Liberties Committee will be holding the Council and Commission to account next Wednesday in Strasbourg and we will continue to work hard to establish serious, long term migration policy proposals in our ongoing work on the holistic report on migration".

Debate with Juncker and Tusk in Strasbourg

MEPs will demand concrete action to halt the deaths of Mediterranean migrants and refugees in a debate with the Commission's President, Jean-Claude Juncker and Council President Donald Tusk on Wednesday at 09.00, in Strasbourg's plenary session. Over 1,600 have died since the start of this year, reports the UN Refugee Agency.

The debate will focus on the ten-point action plan on migration tabled by Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on 20 April and the outcome of the 23 April extraordinary European Council. It will be followed by a vote on a resolution.

Press release

Further information

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>
- Special meeting of the European Council, 23 April 2015 - Statement:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/04/23-special-euco-statement/>

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