

Migration: MEPs assess refugee camps in Calais

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A delegation from the civil liberties committee went to Calais in northern France yesterday to assess the situation of people gathering there with the aim of crossing the Channel. The delegation, led by Portuguese S&D member Ana Gomes, visited facilities for migrants and refugees and met with representatives from local authorities, non-governmental organisations as well as French-British border authorities.

For years, the city of Calais and its surroundings have been a gathering spot for refugees and migrants, many trying to cross the Channel in order to join the United Kingdom. The “jungle” of Calais, a camp where thousands are still living, has become the highly-mediatised symbol of this situation.

On Wednesday 13 July, eight MEPs went to Calais and its environs to meet with local authorities, including the mayor of Calais and the prefect of Pas-de-Calais, members of civil society as well as refugees and migrants.

Ana Gomes, head of the delegation, said: “We came to Calais to find out directly what is happening, what the measures are that are taken by the authorities at the different levels to deal in a human way with the phenomenon of migration.”

MEPs visited among others the Linière camp located in Grande-Synthe, where 800 people are living, and the Jules Ferry day centre in Calais, which looks after 600 unaccompanied minors. They also went to the “jungle” itself.

“The only way to significantly reduce the influx of migrants and refugees is to open safe and legal [means]” in their own countries for them to access the EU,” said Ana Gomes.

The delegation’s conclusions are now going to feed into Parliament’s legislative work.

MEPs are currently working on several proposals to better manage the migration crisis, such as a reform of the rules determining which country is responsible for an asylum application including a system to relocate refugees among member states, a safe list of countries of origin. They have also started to work on a legal proposal to reform rules on highly-skilled migrants coming to the EU to work.

In April MEPs adopted a [report](#) highlighting proposals to address migration challenges. Italian S&D member Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, co-author of the text and part of the delegation to Calais, stressed: “We are not lacking proposals, we are lacking a common vision in Europe.”

[Read our top story](#) to find out more about how Parliament is addressing the migration crisis.

Find out more

- Migration top story: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/top-stories/20150831TST91035/Migration-a-common-challenge>
- Civil liberties committee: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>
- Infographic: number of asylum applications in EU countries since 2011: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160616STO32440/World-Refugee-Day-the-situation-in-Europe>

- Briefing: figures on migration and asylum:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/infographics/migration/public/index.html?page=intro>