

**Background notes – Inter-Parliamentary conference for the CFSP and the CSDP – 5 & 6 September 2015**

## **Workshop 1: Towards a more functional management of migration flows**

### **I. An international humanitarian crisis**

The refugee crisis continues to have dramatic consequences in the Mediterranean and on EU territory. Although the EU has strengthened its rescue capacities following the migrant shipwreck of April 2015, the deadliest to date, the death toll continues to rise. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2,200 people died this year while trying to reach Europe on rudimentary boats.

The refugee flow keeps gaining intensity. According to Frontex, 340,000 migrants and refugees crossed the EU border during the first seven months of 2015. In July, they were 107,500, surpassing the 100,000 mark in a single month for the first time since Frontex began keeping records in 2008. 280,000 migrants and refugees reached the EU in 2014. The majority of them leave from Libya, through the Central route, and from Turkey and through the Western Balkans, through the Eastern route. These arrivals exceed the capacities of affected countries, such as Greece, Italy and Hungary.

According to UNHCR, the countries of origin of migrants who cross the Mediterranean are, principally, Syria (34%), Afghanistan (12%) and Eritrea (12%). On their way to Europe, migrants put the capacities of transit countries under pressure. 4 million Syrians have sought protection in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and other countries of the region. 1.5 million Afghans have fled to Pakistan, while another million live in Iran. 400 000 Eritreans have left their country for Ethiopia and Sudan.

### **II. European reaction**

The scale and international nature of the crisis require an approach including concerned third countries and the use of the most pertinent EU foreign policy instruments.

That is why, the extraordinary European Council of 23 April lead to the **European Agenda on Migration**, presented by the Commission on 13 May, which introduces numerous measures in order to manage migration flows in the framework of the EU's external action. These measures complete the migratory dimension of the **European Neighbourhood Policy** (ENP) and the **Global Approach to Migration and Mobility** (GAMM).

The measures being implemented by the EU and planned by the Commission cover five policy domains, which will be discussed at the **Valetta Conference on Migration** on 11 and 12 November 2015 with the concerned third countries. The conference will gather representatives of the EU, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as heads of State and of government of their respective Member States.

### 1) Cooperation on legal migration and mobility

To this day, the EU has concluded **Mobility Partnerships** with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cabo Verde, Georgia, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Moldova and Tunisia. A **Dialogue on Migration, Mobility and Security** was launched in 2014 with Lebanon. **Visa Liberalisation Action Plans** are being implemented with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In 2014, Moldova reached the last phase of the plan which allows visa free access to the Schengen Area, a measure already enjoyed by the countries of the Western Balkans.

In the framework of the GAMM, the EU conducts **priority dialogues on migration** with: 1) Southern countries through the Africa-EU Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership, the Rabat and Khartoum Processes and the Sahel Regional Action Plan, 2) Eastern countries through the Prague Process and the Eastern Partnership panel on Migration and Asylum, 3) the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) through the Structured Dialogue on Migration, and 4) the countries along the Silk Road through the Budapest Process.

### 2) International Protection and Asylum

In addition to the relocation in EU countries of 32 256 migrants having reached EU territory, the Council has agreed to **resettle** in Europe 22 504 refugees currently outside the EU. Resettlement affects people from nationalities for which the acceptance rate of asylum claims at first instance is equal or higher than 75%.

Moreover, the Commission aims at deepening **Regional Protection Programmes** in order to strengthen the capacities of third countries of origin and transit. These are already applied in Eastern Europe, the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and Eastern North Africa.

The Commission intends to set up a **pilot multi-purpose centre in Niger** by the end of 2015, which will offer local protection, resettlement opportunities, inform migrants on their prospects and suggest voluntary return assistance.

The Commission aims to deploy a dedicated **Frontex** liaison officer to Turkey, a country which bears a heavy burden in welcoming refugees from the region.

### 3) Prevention of and fight against trafficking of human beings

The PSDC operation **EUNAVFOR Med** aims at dismantling the business model of smugglers and traffickers of human beings in the Mediterranean. The mission is in its initial surveillance and assessment phase of smuggling networks. The second and third phases will consist in systematically seeking, capturing and destroying the ships used by smugglers. The Council will have to pronounce itself on the stepping up of the operation, taking into account an eventual opinion of the United Nations Security Council and the agreement of the concerned coastal states. 20 States (BE, CS, CY, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO, SL, SV, UK) participate to the operation.

The Commission also intends to reinforce cooperation with third countries with a view to strike the **financial resources** of smugglers and traffickers.

#### 4) Readmission agreements

In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, **Readmission Agreements** have been concluded with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Agreements are currently being negotiated with Belarus and Morocco. Beyond ENP countries, the EU has concluded readmission agreements with Albania, the FYR of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Macao and Hong Kong, Montenegro, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Turkey. **Mobility Partnerships** under the GAMM can also lead to agreements on readmission. The Commission will conclude readmission agreements in priority with the **main countries of origin of irregular migrants**. The Commission intends to ensure that third countries take over responsibility for their nationals remaining irregularly on EU territory.

#### 5) Maximising development benefits and tackling the root causes of irregular migration

The High Representative/Vice-President keeps up efforts to find a solution to the conflicts in **Libya** and Syria, while the EU extends humanitarian, development and stabilisation aid in Syria and in the neighbouring countries.

The Commission calls to continue to support the United Nations migration objectives, with a particular attention to the **Sustainable Development Goals**, as they will be agreed upon at the United Nations Development Summit, from 25 to 27 September in New York.

The Commission aims at extending support to **south-south mobility**, in order to contribute to local development, following the example of the current EU initiative to foster mobility in the ECOWAS.

The Commission intends to deploy **liaison officers for migration** in the EU delegations of concerned countries and to make of migration a **specific component of EU foreign policy**, in particular in CSDP missions, such as EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger.

#### Some points for discussion:

- Which CFSP instruments shall be privileged in order to promote refugee rights and the fight against trafficking of human beings in transit states?
- How can the EU improve its humanitarian aid and logistical assistance in order to support third countries which welcome refugees?
- Is the EU foreign policy on migration too much influenced by security considerations? How could this policy be formulated in order to be more mutually beneficial and better reflect the EU goals in development cooperation?
- Which policies have to be introduced in order to strengthen the management of migration flows in collaboration with countries of origin and transit of migrants in Africa, the Middle East and the Western Balkans?
- Which priorities shall the EU formulate in the field of return and readmission agreements?
- How can the EU and Member States better contribute to the enduring solution of the conflicts in Syria and Libya, the countries of origin or transit of most refugees?