

Beat: Politics

Europe divided between all its members to combat illegal immigration

European Agenda on Immigration

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USPA NEWS - The European Commission presented a European Agenda on Migration and adopted a set of country-specific economic policy recommendations. Thousands of migrants have been putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean.

This Agenda thus seeks to provide a European response, using all policies and tools at disposal of European members by combining internal and external policies and by involving all actors: Member States, EU institutions, International Organisations, civil society, local authorities and third countries. There is political consensus in the European Parliament and the European Council following the recent tragedies in the Mediterranean to step up EU efforts and take immediate action.

The Commission has set out the concrete and immediate actions it will take, including tripling Frontex capacities, measures for emergency relocations, an EU-wide resettlement scheme, and a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operation in the Mediterranean to capture and destroy boats. The College of Commissioners also adopted country-specific economic policy recommendations for 2015 and 2016 asking for national actions to create jobs and stimulate growth.

These recommendations reflect the Commission's economic and social agenda. Since President Juncker's Commission took office in November 2014 and published its Annual Growth Survey 2015, this agenda has focused on three mutually reinforcing pillars: boosting investment, implementing structural reforms and pursuing fiscal responsibility. The successful implementation of the 2015 country-specific recommendations will be key to making Europe's return to jobs and growth sustainable and less dependent on the external, cyclical factors that currently support the recovery.

"One more crucial element of our emergency response is the resettlement scheme. With the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we want to bring safely and legally to the EU territory 20.000 refugees from third countries, and we will finance this action with 50 million euros," said Wednesday Greek Commissioner Avramopoulos. "The Agenda responds concretely to the immediate need to save lives and assists frontline countries with bold actions. This is not about opening or closing borders, because both are unrealistic. On the one hand, we are reinforcing the Frontex operations, Triton and Poseidon," he added.

Europe will support transit countries such as Jordan, Turkey, which are bearing the brunt of displaced refugees, or Niger, to dry up the source for migrant smugglers networks in Libya. To fight smuggling, European countries will adopt measures to step up the prevention of their criminal activities, to disrupt them, to bring the perpetrators to justice and to seize their assets. In addition, "we will strengthen Frontex so that migrants, who have no right to stay on European soil, will be repatriated. We need to be firm," Avramopoulos said.

"We will propose the triggering of the emergency mechanism to organise a fair relocation of asylum seekers from the Member States under pressure to other Member States based on a distribution key," explain the Greek Commissioner. "For implementing relocation and resettlement, we have developed a distribution key based on objective, quantifiable and verifiable criteria. These criteria are: the size of the population and the total GDP, the number of the asylum applications and persons already resettled, and the unemployment rate," he added.

"Migration has been one of the political priorities of this Commission from the very outset. The main objective of this European Agenda on Migration is to approach the issue of migration in a comprehensive way. Migration has become an increasingly complex phenomenon which cannot be addressed through a one-size-fits-all approach. This is an opportunity for the EU to strike the right balance in its migration policy and send a clear message to citizens that migration can be better managed collectively by all EU actors," said European Commissioner Federica Mogherini in press conference.

"This is why the European Agenda on Migration also defines a new strategic approach to manage better migration in the medium to long term, building on four pillars: 1) reducing the incentives for irregular migration; 2) saving lives and securing the external borders; 3) a strong common asylum policy; 4) a new policy on legal migration," Mogherini added.

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