Managing migration better in all aspects: A European Agenda on Migration

Brussels, 13 May 2015

Today, the European Commission presented a European Agenda on Migration outlining the immediate measures that will be taken in order to respond to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean as well as the steps to be taken in the coming years to better manage migration in all its aspects.

The plight of thousands of migrants putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean has shocked and it has become clear that no Member State can or should be left alone to address huge migratory pressures. This Agenda sets out a European response, combining internal and external policies, making best use of EU agencies and tools, and involving all actors: Member States, EU institutions, International Organisations, civil society, local authorities and third countries.

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "The tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean has shocked all Europeans. Our citizens expect Member States and European institutions to act to prevent this tragedy from continuing unabated. The European Council clearly stated that we need to find European solutions, based on internal solidarity and the realisation that we have a common responsibility to create an effective migration policy. That is why the Commission today proposes an agenda which reflects our common values and provides an answer to our citizens’ worries about unacceptable human suffering on the one hand and inadequate application of our agreed common asylum rules on the other hand. The measures we propose will help manage migration better and thus respond to the justified expectations of citizens."

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini said: "With this bold agenda, the European Union has proven itself ready to address the plight of those escaping from wars, persecution and poverty. Migration is a shared responsibility of all Member States and all member States are called now to contribute to tackling this historical challenge. And this is not only a European but a global challenge: with this agenda we confirm and broaden our cooperation with the countries of origin and transit in order to save lives, clamp down on smuggling networks and protect those in need. But we all know that a real, long term response will come only from fixing the root causes; from poverty to instability caused by wars, to the crises in Libya and Syria. As the European Union, we are engaged and determined to cooperate with the international community on this."

Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "Europe cannot stand by whilst lives are being lost. The European Agenda on Migration concretely responds to the immediate need to save lives and assist frontline countries with bold actions, including strengthened presence at sea of Frontex-coordinated vessels, €60 million in emergency assistance and an action plan to crack down on smugglers who take advantage and abuse vulnerable migrants. In a spirit of greater solidarity, we are determined to implement a comprehensive approach that will improve significantly the management of migration in Europe."

Immediate Action

There is political consensus in the European Parliament and the European Council following the recent tragedies in the Mediterranean to mobilise all efforts and tools at our disposal to take immediate action to prevent more people from dying at sea. Today the Commission has set out the concrete and immediate actions it will take, including:

- Tripling the capacities and assets for the Frontex joint operations Triton and Poseidon in 2015 and 2016. An amending budget for 2015 was adopted today to secure the necessary funds – a total of €89 million, including €57 million in AMIF and €5 million in ISF emergency funding for frontline Member States – and the new Triton Operational Plan will be presented by the end of May;

- Proposing the first ever activation of the emergency mechanism to help Member states confronted with a sudden influx of migrants under Article 78(3) TFEU. By the end of May, the Commission will propose a temporary distribution mechanism for persons in clear need of international protection within the EU. A proposal for a permanent EU system for relocation in emergency
situations of mass influxes will follow by the end of 2015;

- Proposing, by the end of May, an EU-wide resettlement scheme to offer 20,000 places distributed in all Member States to displaced persons in clear need of international protection in Europe with a dedicated extra funding of €50 million for 2015 and 2016;

- Working on a possible Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operation in the Mediterranean to dismantle traffickers' networks and fight smuggling of people, in accordance with international law.

**The Way Forward: Four pillars to manage migration better**

The migration crisis in the Mediterranean has put the spotlight on immediate needs. But it has also revealed that our collective EU migration policy has fallen short. Looking forward, the European Agenda on Migration develops President Juncker's Political Guidelines into a set of mutually coherent and reinforcing initiatives, based around four pillars, to manage migration better in all its aspects (see also Annex).

The four pillars of the new Agenda on Migration are:

- **Reducing the incentives for irregular migration**, notably by seconding European migration liaison officers to EU Delegations in key third countries; amending the Frontex legal basis to strengthen its role on return; a new action plan with measures that aim to transform people smuggling into high risk, low return criminal activity and addressing the root causes through development cooperation and humanitarian assistance;

- **Border management – saving lives and securing external borders**, notably by strengthening the role and capacity of Frontex; helping strengthen the capacity of third countries to manage their borders; pooling further, where necessary, certain coast guard functions at EU level;

- **Europe's duty to protect: a strong common asylum policy**: The priority is to ensure a full and coherent implementation of the Common European Asylum System, notably by promoting systematic identification and fingerprinting and with efforts to reduce its abuses by strengthening the Safe Country of Origin provisions of the Asylum Procedure Directive; evaluating and possibly revising the Dublin Regulation in 2016;

- **A new policy on legal migration**: The focus is on maintaining a Europe in demographic decline as an attractive destination for migrants, notably by modernising and overhauling the Blue Card scheme, by reprioritising our integration policies, and by maximising the benefits of migration policy to individuals and countries of origin, including by facilitating cheaper, faster and safer remittance transfers.

**Background**

On 23 April 2014, in Malta, Jean-Claude Juncker presented a five point plan on immigration, calling for more solidarity in the EU's migration policy as part of his campaign to become European Commission President.

Upon taking office, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker entrusted a Commissioner with special responsibility for Migration to work on a new policy on migration as one of the 10 priorities of the Political Guidelines, the political programme based on which the European Parliament elected the Commission.

Based on a proposal by the European Commission, in a European Council statement of 23 April 2015, Member States committed to taking rapid action to save lives and to step up EU action in the field of migration. A European Parliament Resolution followed a few days later.
For More Information

A European Agenda on Migration: Questions and Answers
Factsheet: Relocation and Resettlement
Factsheet: Joint Operation Triton
Factsheet: Legal Migration
Country factsheets: European Assistance to Member States
Glossary: The Agenda explained
Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs Website
Website of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans
Website of High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini
Website of Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos
Communication on the European Agenda on Migration
Annex to the European Agenda on Migration

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