



**Parliament of Romania
Chamber of Deputies
Committee on European Affairs**

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**Opinion
on the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Addressing
the Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Role of EU External Action - JOIN(2015)40**

According to the provisions of Article 170 paragraph (1) of the Regulations of the Chamber of Deputies, republished, The Committee on European Affairs, together with the Committee for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities Issues, the Committee for Legal Matters, Discipline, and Immunities, the Committee for Defence, Public Order, and National Security, the Committee for Foreign Policy were notified to examine on the merits the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council – Addressing the Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Role of EU External Action – JOIN(2015)40.

Having regard to:

- the draft opinion adopted by the Committee for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities Issues (4c-5/656/5.10.2015),
- the draft opinion adopted by the Committee for Defence, Public Order and National Security (4c-12/277/6.10.2015),
- the draft opinion adopted by the Committee for Foreign Policy (4c-13/57/30.09.2015),
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Notice,
- the Ministry of Internal Affairs Notice,
- Notice of the European Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration,
- Notice of the Office in Romania of the International Organization for Migration,
- messages of the Representative of Romania to EU,
- the contributions to the debates, of the representatives of the aforementioned institutions,
- the contributions of own secretariat,
- the fact sheet and the contributions of the EU Division - Chamber of Deputies,

- opinion of the Chamber of Deputies of 30 June 2015 on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A European agenda on migration - COM(2015)240,
- opinion of the Chamber of Deputies of 30 June 2015 on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Agenda on Security - COM(2015)185

The European Affairs Committee:

1. Notes that the document examined presents an inventory of the EU intervention in the countries of origin and transit and suggests deepening of high-level dialogues on migration, with respect to the Rabat and Khartoum Processes – with the African countries –, the Budapest Process – with Central and Eastern Asia – and proposes a renewal of the efforts to support the diplomatic initiatives and for finding political solutions to the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Libya.
2. Admits the usefulness of the external action instruments, existing or proposed for managing the migration, including the following concrete objectives/measures:
 - deploying humanitarian assistance, securing access to asylum, addressing the root causes of migration, in particular conflicts, political violence, abuse of human rights, fighting poverty;
 - strengthening of political dialogue, cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience with partner countries, civil society organisations and local authorities;
 - establishing a European Trust Fund for Africa;
 - a new regional migration management programme, developed by the Commission to Turkey and the Balkan states;
 - providing assistance by the Commission to Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia regarding the concrete aspects related to migration and asylum policy;
 - further support to border management in Africa;
 - deployment of cooperation with the international organizations on migration;
 - strengthening of cooperation on return and readmission.
3. Notes that the European Union's external action combines political, development and humanitarian aid instruments and that the challenges related to migration and refugees were addressed for several years through these instruments.

External cooperation and development cooperation have a budget allocation of 96.8 billion Euros for the 2014-2020 period, in support of the regions and countries where refugee flows originate, in areas such as economic growth and job creation, peace and security, human rights and good governance.

4. Admits that the current refugee crisis is an aggravation of older problems and should benefit of a strategic approach that incorporates a balanced proportion between solidarity and responsibility and between the diplomatic and financial tools of the Union.

5. Supports the approach that defines the refugee crisis as an international challenge and not just European, which requires cooperation of the Union with key international partners and with the United Nations, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as with organizations such as the International Organization for Migration.

Welcomes the mobilization of an additional amount of at least one billion Euros for the UN agencies that help refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries.

Recommends extending the international cooperation by involving organizations of sectoral but relevant interest, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the Red Cross / Red Crescent. It would be useful to analyze the possibility of organizing a high level international conference to bring to the same table for discussion as many as possible of these factors, by expanding the dialogue process already designed by the two meetings prepared in this area, namely the summit on migration from Valletta and the high level conference on the Western Balkans route / Eastern Mediterranean route.

6. Recognizes the importance of bilateral cooperation with the countries of origin and transit, using all existing instruments, such as the Mobility Partnerships, the Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility or the readmission agreements.
7. Appreciates the statement of the Commission that the EU Delegations will intensify their contacts with the local authorities and that the capacity of the Delegations in the key countries of transit and origin is being reinforced through the deployment of European Migration Liaison Officers.
8. Welcomes the Romanian Government's orientation that our country contributes to the Union's effort towards the unprecedented challenge of the massive influx of migrants, supporting a coordinated response at the EU level, in the spirit of solidarity.
9. Affirms the need for a comprehensive strategy, based on the connection between the internal and external dimension of migration, leading to fighting the root causes of the phenomenon and which includes measures of economic, social and educational nature in the countries of origin, management of crises in these countries, post-conflict stabilization, through better use of the external financial instruments and of the EU development policy, cooperation with the transit countries, including the candidates, fighting human trafficking.
10. Joins the EU institutions and the Member States supporting the preservation of the Schengen Agreement as a successful achievement of the Union and who reject the pretexts for challenging the agreement, including the influx of migrants and/or amplification of the security risks.

Considers that the preservation of the Schengen Agreement should not, in any way, be conditioned by the migrational pressures, especially that its instruments are proving extremely useful in the management of migration; the temporary reintroduction of the checks at the internal borders of the Union, provided by the Agreement, although is not a risk, but rather can attenuate the fears of some Member States, is not a quality solution, because it is not efficient and enhances the feeling of redrawing certain lines of demarcation, affecting thus, the openness towards cooperation.

11. Rallies to EU in highlighting the major contribution of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey in limiting the effects of the crisis, through the way in which they organized the reception of refugees. Therefore, considers that the financing by the European Union of the programs in these countries is fully justified.

12. Points out, in agreement with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, that resolving the situation in Syria will not automatically bring a diminution of the refugee crisis and urges the European Commission to prepare both long term measures in order to manage the number of refugees and also emergency measures, on the supposition of a possible escalation of the conflict in Syria.

13. Considers that the efforts of foreign policy in the field would be more effective if an explicit parliamentary dimension would be added to them, at least in terms of legislative activity, given that the democratic, and even legislative deficit are among the causes of the current crisis.

14. Underlines that the responsibility of defending the external border of the Union is of the first order for preventing the security threats.

Recalls once again that Romania offers a positive example in this respect, succeeding the management and securing at high standards of the second longest border on the eastern side of the Union (2070 km), according to Frontex reports. In this way Romania is already acting as a *de facto* member of the Schengen area and wants to maintain this performance.

15. Recognizes the success of certain operations and missions of the Common Security and Defence Policy in the fight against organized crime, but does not believe that in this way, the perception of the exclusively "*soft power*" profile of the Union can be changed. Considers that the measures to deter the traffickers of migrants by destroying the boats, announced through several acts of the Union, should be enforced as soon as possible.

16. Recommends empowering the External Action Service of the Union to negotiate with the relevant third country authorities, through their representatives accredited to those states, that the State concerned make a request for intervention, so that the legal obligations regarding the power interventions can be achieved operatively.

17. Takes note of the declaration at the end of the informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government of 23 September 2015: "*As regards Syria, we call for a renewed UN-led international effort to bring an end to the war that has caused so much suffering and forced an estimated 12 million people to leave their homes*" and recommends using all instruments available to the Union, necessary so that the normalization of the situation, both in Syria and in other countries of origin of the refugees, becomes a realistic perspective.

Considers that such situations should call into question the transformation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and respectively of the Common Security and Defence Policy of the Union, in true European policies, the best way by which the global player role of the EU could be achieved.

Considers, as well, that in such a state of things, the European solidarity should also manifest by resuming the internal debates on accession to NATO of the Member States of the Union that do not have this quality.

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The Committee on European Affairs, at the sitting of 6 October 2015, in the presence of 15 of the 22 members, decided unanimously to adopt this opinion to be forwarded to the Standing Bureau of the Chamber of Deputies, for completion of the parliamentary scrutiny procedure.

Proposes to inform the European Union institutions and the Romanian Government on its observations and recommendations, as a contribution to the formulation of effective policies in the field of reference.

Proposes, at the same time, to forward its observations / recommendations to the European Commission, in the informal political dialogue proposed by the European Commission in the Communication "Delivering results for Europe", COM (2006) 211.

Chairperson,

Secretary,

Ana BIRCHALL

Dorel Gheorghe CĂPRAR

Written by DM, FA