

**Question for oral answer O-000039/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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Subject: Outsourcing of asylum processing and search and rescue operations to third countries

While at least 1 500 migrants have died so far in 2015, with more than 700 migrants feared to have drowned last Sunday, Italian Interior Minister Angelino Alfano made a proposal to outsource search and rescue and EU maritime border control to countries such as Egypt or Tunisia, which would then take the rescued migrants to their shores. The proposal, which aims to produce a 'real deterrent effect, so that fewer migrants would be ready to put their life at risk to reach Europe's coasts', was presented to France, Germany, Spain and the Commission in the margins of the Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA) of 12 March 2015 and discussed further at a meeting in the Commission of Tuesday, 17 March 2015.

Parallel to these talks, Interior Ministers at the JHA Council also discussed the possibilities of setting up refugee camps in Northern Africa and the possibility of processing asylum applications in these camps – a proposal that has been repeatedly dismissed in the past 15 years by the Commission and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), given the numerous legal and practical obstacles, including the risk of breaching the international principle of non-refoulement.

- What is the Commission's stance on the 'non-paper' presented by Minister Alfano? Can it elaborate on the consistency of such a proposal with EU and international asylum legislation, including with the principle of non-refoulement?
- Given the timing of such initiatives and the Commission's involvement in these discussions, are there plans to include outsourcing search and rescue and/or external asylum processing in the European agenda on migration?
- Can it elaborate on the current legal and practical obstacles to external joint processing?
- Does it intend to present proposals for safe and legal avenues to the EU for both asylum-seekers and migrants in its upcoming European agenda on migration beyond its revision of the Blue Card Directive and existing initiatives on resettlement, and does it take a stance on the recommendations put forward by the UNHCR in annex to its letter sent on 2 March 2015 to the Commission?

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Forwarded: 22.4.2015

Deadline for reply: 29.4.2015