



Plenary sitting

B9-0029/2019

16.7.2019

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation at the USA-Mexican border
(2019/2733(RSP))

Michael Gahler, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Antonio Tajani, Tomáš Zdechovský, Romana Tomc, Eva Maydell, Roberta Metsola, Andrey Kovatchev, Peter Pollák, Vladimír Bilčík, Michal Wiezik, Michaela Šojdrová, Andrzej Halicki, Loránt Vincze, Karoline Edtstadler, David Lega, Sandra Kalniete
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation at the USA-Mexican border
(2019/2733(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the United States-Mexico Declaration of Principles on Economic, Development and Cooperation in Southern Mexico and Central America of the 18 December 2018,
 - having regards to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 8 July 2019,
 - having regard to the statement by the acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security on July 9, 2019,
 - having regard to the memorandum of the US Inspector General of 2 July, 2019.
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the free and open society in the USA, with high standards of democracy, rule of law and human rights has attracted large amounts of people from poorer and less safe areas in their southern neighbourhood, lately particularly from the so-called Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras);
- B. whereas as a result of its respect for individual rights and freedoms, robust economic progress, and democratic ideals, the United States historically has always attracted migrants striving for a better future and the realisation of the “American Dream”, and whereas the United States hence is a role model for successful immigration and integration and whereas the United States has more immigrants than any other country in the world with more than 40 million people living in the United States who were born in another country;
- C. whereas migration to the United States from Central America have increased considerably over the last decade;
- D. whereas until recently migrants apprehended at the US Southwest border were predominantly single, adult males from Mexico; whereas currently the majority of them are families and unaccompanied children, coming from the so-called Northern Triangle;
- E. whereas by mid-June 2019 more than 15,000 asylum seekers have been returned to Mexico by US authorities to await hearings in American immigration courts;
- F. whereas the United States and Mexico reached a deal on restrictive measures on migration by the Mexican side in exchange for avoiding imposition of customs duties on Mexican exports to the US; whereas after the first three weeks of the deal being in force, the deportation of migrants by Mexico increased by 33%; whereas under the administration of the President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Mexico has agreed to

deploy 12 000 members of its national guard to secure its southern border with Guatemala;

- G. whereas the creation of a new national guard under the command of the army by the President Obrador was highly criticised; whereas the law authorises the use of force against protestors and demonstration that do not have a “lawful” purpose; whereas such acting could lead to more violence, disappearances and human rights violations;
- H. whereas in recent weeks, Mexican authorities have set up immigration checkpoints at southern border and have been aggressively detaining and deporting thousands of migrants; whereas some immigration officers are cooperating with smugglers in order to let people through the border; whereas as a result of this migrants are frequently attacked by thieves and kidnappers; whereas around checkpoints women increasingly fall victim of rape and sexual assault;
- I. whereas under such circumstances as described above, the migrants mainly from Central America are forced to reach and cross the border with the US; whereas pressure on southern and northern borders leads the thousands of migrants, most of them being women and children, to put their lives at serious risk;
- J. whereas in 2019 Mexico has reported the highest murder rate ever, with an increase of about 9.6% on the same period in 2018; whereas with about 80 murders a day, Mexico seems to be locked in a spiral of violence; whereas more than nine out of ten crimes go unpunished; whereas since the year 2000 more than 128 journalists were murdered;
- K. whereas the US Office of Inspector General (OIG) in a memorandum of 2 July for the acting Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security on the situation in the Rio Grande Valley reception centre, highlighted “urgent issues that require immediate attention and action” due to “serious overcrowding and prolonged detention of unaccompanied alien children, families, and single adults that require immediate attention” and therefore called for “immediate steps to alleviate dangerous overcrowding and prolonged detention of children and adults in the Rio Grande Valley”;
- L. whereas the OIG in the same report noted that “about 8,000 detainees [were] in custody at the time of our visit, with 3,400 held longer than the 72 hours generally permitted under the TEDS standards. Of those 3,400 detainees, Border Patrol held 1,500 for more than 10 days”;
- M. whereas already in May 2019, the OIG had issued a management alert about dangerous overcrowding observed in the El Paso area during an unannounced inspection of US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) holding facilities, whereas during the week of June 10, 2019, the Office of Inspector General travelled to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and again observed serious overcrowding and prolonged detention in Border Patrol facilities requiring immediate attention;
- N. whereas States do have the sovereign prerogative to decide on the conditions of entry and stay of foreign nationals;

- O. whereas the United States in 2018 was by far the largest donor to the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR with a total of US\$ 1,589,776,543;
1. Notes with concern the worrying situation at the USA-Mexican border, where as a result of large numbers of irregular migrants trying to enter the USA, the reception centres of the USA are facing an overstretch which has led to increasingly inadequate conditions which require the immediate attention of the US government;
 2. Regrets the loss of lives of many people along the route towards the US and the Mexican borders; expresses its full solidarity with all victims and their families;
 3. Stresses that the EU and the US have an unparalleled political and economic relationship and a common interest in promoting global governance based on the core principles of freedom and democracy, transparency, accountability, rule of law and also the respect and defence of human rights;
 4. Stresses that border management measures must comply with the State's human rights obligations and should not be based on narrow policies aimed at detecting, detaining and expeditiously deporting irregular migrants;
 5. Welcomes the report by the OIG and other reports as signs that the US system is functioning and will in itself find the appropriate measures to correct the shortcomings identified;
 6. Calls on the US Department for Homeland Security to act upon the conclusions and recommendations listed in the report of the OIG of 2 July, and improve the conditions and the applied policies at the reception centres at the southern border of the USA;
 7. Deplores the repressive migratory policies adopted by the Mexican authorities which are endangering peoples' lives; points out that such policies are one of the main reasons of the massive concentration of the migrants at the U.S / Mexico borders;
 8. Calls on the Mexican government to comply with the international standards and human rights law when addressing migration;
 9. Considers that the army is not the right instrument to deal with migration issues; points out that the situation on the borders should be handled by the specialised police which is duly trained and instructed to respect human rights and the dignity of migrants;
 10. Welcomes the United States-Mexico Declaration of Principles on Economic Development and Cooperation in Southern Mexico and Central America, and stresses that long term root causes of forced migration can only be tackled by improving the overall living conditions through economic and social development;
 11. Recalls its belief in open and fair trade, and expresses its firm believe that economic coercion and the threat of punitive tariffs are counterproductive and do not lead to

constructive and sustainable solutions to political challenges between sovereign countries;

12. Acknowledges that migration is a global challenge facing a number of countries and hence calls for further UN-led efforts to coordinate and find appropriate responses to the many challenges linked to migration;
13. Recognises the important work done by the EU and UN and other actors in the field of development and humanitarian aid and encourages all actors to review their policies regarding the assistance to migrants in Central America and to strive for ways to intensify their efforts to help to alleviate the plight of those in need;
14. Calls on the European Parliament's Committee on Development to closely monitor EU development aid to the region, ensuring high levels of development efficiency, which can help tackle the root causes of forced migration;
15. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Commission, the Council, and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Governments and the Parliaments of the USA and Mexico.