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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0339/2023**

10.7.2023

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the need for EU action on search and rescue in the Mediterranean  
(2023/2787(RSP))

**Jaak Madison, Jean-Paul Garraud, Nicolaus Fest, Tom Vandendriessche,**  
on behalf of the ID Group  
**Balázs Hidvéghi**

**European Parliament resolution on the need for EU action on search and rescue in the Mediterranean  
(2023/2787(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982,
- having regard to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Protocol),
- having regard to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the Commission on 23 September 2020,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 23 September 2020 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council introducing a screening of third country nationals at the external borders and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/817 (COM(2020)0612),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 23 September 2020 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on asylum and migration management and amending Council Directive (EC) 2003/109 and the proposed Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Asylum and Migration Fund] (COM(2020)0610),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 23 September 2020 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council addressing situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum (COM(2020)0613),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 27 April 2022 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (COM(2022)0650),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing rules for the surveillance of the external sea borders in the context of operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member

States of the European Union<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration of 2018,
  - having regard to the Global Compact on Refugees of 2018,
  - having regard to the EU-Turkey Statement of 7 March 2016,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,
- A. whereas the Member States have experienced unprecedented migratory pressure for years; whereas migration is a global phenomenon amplified by policies that create pull factors for migrants; whereas Europe is an attractive destination for migrants because of its political, economic and social stability and its human rights standards;
- B. whereas the Commission introduced its New Pact on Asylum and Migration in September 2020; whereas Parliament has recently adopted positions on certain legislative files that are part of the Pact;
- C. whereas several governments adopted the 2018 Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees without consulting their citizens and without any democratic accountability;
- D. whereas border control and the ability to decide who to allow to enter and reside in a state are essential elements of territorial sovereignty;
- E. whereas the argument that Europe's population is ageing should not be used as a false narrative to justify further mass migration; whereas uncontrolled mass migration threatens peace and security in Europe and relations between European states; whereas uncontrolled mass migration endangers Europe's values, heritage and culture, and even our very existence;
- F. whereas an increasing number of Member States have adopted policies to regulate search and rescue activities carried out by private actors;
1. Deeply regrets the loss of life in the Mediterranean; emphasises that these deaths could have been prevented if the EU had adopted an effective zero-tolerance migration policy that does not create the pull factors that make migrants risk their lives on unseaworthy vessels; underlines that the biggest tragedy is that people are boarding unseaworthy vessels, in the false hope of reaching the EU, for economic reasons; points out that the migrants reaching the EU by sea include nationals of countries such as Pakistan, Egypt and Bangladesh, all of which are considered safe countries whose nationals are not granted asylum;
2. Expresses its sincere appreciation for the Member States that are on the front line of the Mediterranean migration crisis, including Italy, Spain and Greece, and for their coastguards; insists that the only way to effectively support these Member States is to adopt a strict migration policy that ends illegal migration attempts, and to refrain from

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 189, 27.6.2014, p. 93.

creating pull factors for illegal migrants; warns that any increase in EU search and rescue capacity would create further pull factors that would encourage migrants to risk their lives to travel to Europe;

3. Highlights that vessels operated by private actors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) act as a smuggling service for illegal migrants and often facilitate human trafficking; stresses, furthermore, that NGOs cannot take over the role of governments in search and rescue activities; insists that illegal search and rescue activities should be punished in accordance with national criminal law, given that they contribute to deteriorating maritime safety; recalls that NGO vessels that have rescued people are bound by international law to bring them to the first and closest safe port;
4. Expresses concern about reports that NGOs are encouraging migrants to dispose of their travel and identification documents and are coaching them on what to say to guarantee that their asylum claims will be successful; recalls that sources within the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) have confirmed that certain NGOs regularly cooperate with smugglers;
5. Reiterates that Member States have the sovereign right to control their borders and determine who is entitled to enter and reside on their territory; emphasises that migrants' rights should always be balanced against the rights of Member State citizens;
6. Calls on the Commission and the other EU institutions to cease encroaching on the sovereign right of Member States to decide on and control their own immigration policy, as well as their own temporary residence schemes; stresses that 'legal pathways' or 'mobility' schemes allowing third-country nationals to enter Member States will not contribute to halting illegal immigration; points out that over the past decade, which has seen a mass influx of third-country nationals, the EU has failed to attract international talent or the desired labour immigration; stresses that the majority of those reaching European shores have been economic migrants;
7. Deplores the dissemination of false arguments, such as the idea that the EU has an ageing population that needs to be rejuvenated by mass immigration; emphasises that the Member States can address the issue of an ageing population by adopting policies that benefit families instead of creating additional legal pathways for migration; insists on the use of precise legal terminology, such as 'illegal migration', in EU legislation, instead of vague terms such as 'irregular migration'; reiterates that creating additional 'legal' pathways for migration does not alleviate the migratory crisis, but instead simply legalises actions that are currently illegal;
8. Underlines that uncontrolled migration puts severe pressure on public funds and that prison population figures show that illegal migrants are disproportionately responsible for crime in the Member States;
9. Reminds the Commission and the Member States that there are clear rules for distinguishing economic migrants from refugees or asylum seekers; urges both the Commission and the Member States not to issue misleading public statements that could blur the legal line between categories of migrants and refugees; underlines, therefore, the importance of interpreting the term 'refugee' narrowly, as originally intended; further urges the Member States not to broaden the definition of refugees to include so-

called ‘climate refugees’;

10. Insists on a policy of regional placement of refugees, which would allow them to return home and rebuild once the situation in their country of origin improves; insists that the right to lodge an asylum application should not be used as a free pass to enter the EU; calls, therefore, for an approach whereby asylum applications are lodged in the country of origin or in a third country close to the country of origin;
11. Proposes that the granting of development aid to third countries be made conditional on cooperation with the EU on migration and security; considers that visa policies are important tools for incentivising cooperation on migration and security policies, including by adopting more restrictive visa policies for third countries that do not cooperate adequately on readmissions and border management;
12. Considers that the EU made itself vulnerable to the weaponisation of migration through its ‘Wilkommenspolitik’ during the previous migration crisis of 2015; condemns in the strongest terms the weaponisation of migration by foreign actors and governments;
13. Calls on the Commission to revise its position that EU funding should not be used to construct physical barriers at the external borders of the EU to prevent illegal migrants from entering; underlines that returning migrants to safe third countries is essential for protecting Europe’s external borders and achieving balanced asylum policies; reiterates that individuals who travel through several safe countries before lodging an asylum application in the EU should not be granted refugee status;
14. Emphasises that, contrary to the situation at land borders, where physical structures should be financed and constructed, some of the efforts in the Mediterranean should concentrate on working towards fully utilising the capacity of drones or satellite information to detect smugglers’ vessels;
15. Warns that massive migratory influxes from Islamic countries create major security, social and cultural challenges; recalls that several criminal investigations into terrorist acts in Europe concluded that terrorists had managed to travel to Europe in the guise of ‘refugees’; recalls that, during the 2015 migration crisis, several Islamic State members, who later planned attacks in Paris, used the influx of migrants to travel to Europe undetected;
16. Considers that the only solution to the possible migratory crisis is for the EU to stop all illegal migration; emphasises that the creation of additional pathways for legal migration is not a logical solution to limit migration to Europe and will just create more impetus for people to make perilous journeys to Europe; reiterates that Europe is unable to house all the people from all over the world who seek a better future;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.