

SAFE AND LEGAL CHANNELS FOR MIGRATION

[● DEPARTURES]

> ■■■ EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION

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> ■■■ NEW POLICY ON LEGAL MIGRATION

CONTENT

Following the April 2016 CEAS reform communication on Common European Asylum System (CEAS) reform and enhancing legal avenues to Europe, the Commission presented in June 2016 a proposal for Reforming the Blue Card Directive by offering more flexible admission conditions, improved admission procedures and enhanced rights. (see the file on THE BLUE CARD DIRECTIVE) and An action plan to support Member States in third-country nationals' integration and their economic and social contribution to the EU. (see the file on INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS).

Two other major related Commission actions include the July 2016 EU Resettlement Framework proposing a common European resettlement policy ensuring orderly and safe pathways to Europe for persons needing international protection, in the context of CEAS reform, and long-term better migration management under the May 2015 European Agenda on Migration (EAM). A particular focus here is the EAM-related new results-oriented Partnership Framework for cooperation with key third countries of origin and transit announced in June 2016;

On the EU Resettlement Framework, the European Parliament's LIBE Committee adopted a report at first/single reading (rapporteur - Malin Björk, GUE/NGL, Sweden) on 23 October 2017, focusing on the following points:

- resettlement complements other legal international protection routes (humanitarian visas, humanitarian admission programmes etc.) and does not replace them;
- the Framework should be based on most vulnerable refugees' humanitarian needs, alleviate protracted refugee situations, and be aligned with existing international resettlement structures (e.g. UNHCR);
- the Framework should base itself on the UNHCR's thorough assessment of most urgent global resettlement needs;
- the Framework resettlement target should be minimum 25% of the Annual Projected Global Resettlement Needs (some 250,000 people);
 - the European Union Asylum Agency (EASO) should provide operational support to EU Member States starting their first resettlement programmes;
 - Member States need an additional incentive' to participate in the Resettlement Framework, apart from existing funds for resettled persons from Asylum. Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF);
 - Member States should issue permanent/unlimited residence permits to resettled persons on more favourable terms and

facilitate integration;

- a robust EU Resettlement Framework should be combined with other legal pathways.

The Council welcomed the proposal's objectives, but some delegations were concerned about a possible broadening of the humanitarian admission procedure's flexibility to people not needing international protection and the possibility of granting temporary status under national law. The Estonian Presidency (July-December 2017) aimed at achieving a general approach on this proposal before the end of its term.

JHA Councillors' further examination of the Estonian Presidency's draft compromise proposals in October 2017 highlighted progress on many aspects, but also some unresolved issues (i.e. "resettlement" and "humanitarian admission" definitions and scope, status given to the persons admitted).

In December 2017, the Council noted that the negotiations' mandate with the European Parliament met most Member States' concerns, being more flexible by including humanitarian admission and reflecting resettlement's voluntary nature. Trilogues with Parliament took place between December 2017 and the end of June 2018 allowing some progress on several elements of the proposal. In June 2018, the Bulgarian Presidency and the EP reached a broad political agreement on the Regulation's main elements. The provisional agreement's text presented to COREPER on 20 June 2018 failed to gain the necessary support from delegations and the Austrian Presidency held bilateral meetings with those Member States that were not in a position to endorse the provisional agreement. Hence, new compromise proposals were presented to Parliament, but after a first technical trilogue, it indicated that in principle and for the time being, it stands by the agreement reached in the June trilogue. In October 2018, JHA Counsellors discussed possible compromise amendments dealing with Member States' key concerns, and compromise proposals were presented for approval in COREPER in November 2018 in view of a possible continuation of negotiations with the EP, but the Presidency concluded that consultations should continue at technical level. After COREPER discussions in January and February 2019 on remaining issues left out from the June 2018 provisional agreement, and informal technical discussions with the EP, the Presidency suggested some new compromise proposals. However, while the majority of Member States could support the content of the Presidency's text, on 15 February 2019 COREPER did not give a mandate to the Presidency to proceed to a trilogue with the EP due to the "package approach".

Concerning the Partnership Framework for cooperation, Parliament debated the proposal on 7 June 2016, following its presentation by High Representative Federica Mogherini. It welcomed cooperation with African countries, but criticised the potential duplicating of the Turkey deal with other third countries.

In June 2016, the European Council endorsed the establishment of a new Partnership Framework to deepen cooperation with key African countries of origin and transit, also broadening its geographical scope to other partner countries. In December 2016, it further acknowledged the Framework as a tool addressing illegal migration's root causes (particularly concerning the Central Mediterranean route). It also welcomed the implementation of the compacts with five African countries of origin or transit and partner countries' growing ownership, suggesting potential additional compacts or other forms of cooperation depending on available resources.

In September 2017, the Commission adopted the fifth Partnership Framework progress report.

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For further information: Nikolai Atanassov, legislative-train@europarl.europa.eu

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Visit the European Parliament homepage on [Migration](#).

HYPERLINK REFERENCES

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