Migration: MEPs back cooperation with Africa but warn against new “Turkey deals”

A majority of MEPs welcomed plans to step up cooperation with third countries, particularly in Africa, by increasing public and private investment there to support economic and social development and curb migration flows. But many MEPs also warned against replicating the EU deal with Turkey in Tuesday’s debate with EU Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, who presented a proposal for a new “partnership framework with third countries”.

The Commission plans to establish tailored “compacts” with selected countries – Jordan and Lebanon in a first phase, followed by Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia, as well as Tunisia and Libya – so as to enhance border control, increase returns and improve living conditions for migrants and refugees. These strategic partnerships should reward countries willing to cooperate with the EU while penalising those who refuse, it said.

Presentation of the framework proposal on external aspects of the European migration agenda

Statement by Frans TIMMERMANS, First Vice-President of the European Commission

Statement by Federica MOGHERINI, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security

Political group speakers (click on name to view the statements in full)

Manfred WEBER (EPP, DE) endorsed the idea of extending an investment plan similar to the “Juncker plan” to Africa and agreed with penalising those countries not eager to cooperate.

Gianni PITTELLA (S&D, IT) called for a real global partnership with Africa, not limited to migration, and underlined the many shared challenges that both continents face.

Helga STEVENS (ECR, BE) supported offering financial support to Africa, but insisted on strong border controls, fighting smugglers and effectively returning those migrants not entitled to stay in Europe.

Guy VERHOFSTADT (ALDE, BE) opposed duplicating the Turkey deal with other third countries. Money in exchange of migration control “is not the way forward”, he said.
Barbara SPINELLI (GUE/NGL, IT) criticised the idea of linking economic cooperation to border control and effective readmissions as "stepping in line with the extreme right".

Judith SARGENTINI (Greens/EFA, NL) warned against repeating the same mistakes as with the EU-Turkey deal, such as using money to strengthen “fortress Europe” instead of reducing poverty and combating inequality.

Rolandas PAKSAS (EFD, LT) said a plan to “buy African countries to stop migration flows” was “unsustainable”.

Harald VILIMSKY (ENF, AT) blamed major German car manufacturers for having applauded the Arab spring for setting free a cheap labour force.

You can watch the plenary debates via EP Live, and EbS+.

Further information
EP Live
EbS+
Communication on establishing a New Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration
Migration and asylum in the EU: animated infographic (May 2016)
EuroparlTV

Political groups
Press release by the EPP group
Press release by the S&D group
News pages of the ECR group
News pages of the ALDE group
News pages of the GUE/NGL group
News pages of the Greens/EFA group
News pages of the EFDD group

Contacts

Estefania NARRILLOS
Press Service
(+32) 2 28 31324 (BXL)
(+33) 3 881 73661 (STR)
(+32) 498 98 39 85
@EP_Justice
estefania.narrilos@europarl.europa.eu
First Vice-President Timmermans and EU Foreign policy chief Mogherini presented in plenary their proposal to strengthen cooperation with third countries to curb migration flows © EU 2016 - European Parliament

Towards a new "Migration Compact" and joint debate on Legal migration package