
EU migration policy: MEPs call for better protection against human rights violations

In a report adopted on Wednesday, the Foreign Affairs Committee criticises the EU and some EU countries for overusing informal agreements on the return and readmission of irregular migrants.

On Wednesday (results announced on Thursday), Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee adopted a report analysing and providing recommendations on human rights protection in the framework of the EU's external asylum and migration policy.

The text notes that, since 2016, the EU and some individual member countries have made many informal agreements and arrangements with third countries on strengthening their border control and management capacities, fighting human trafficking and on the return and readmission of irregular migrants.

It also highlights several worrying trends and the practical human rights implications stemming from the increasing number, and hence the extrajudicial nature, of such informal arrangements, which are concluded without due democratic scrutiny and parliamentary oversight and are not subject to judicial scrutiny.

Therefore, MEPs urge the European Commission to initiate or finalise negotiations and accordingly sign readmission agreements with third countries. However, formal readmission agreements should be prioritised, they say. MEPs note the absence of adequate operational, reporting, monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms to track individual cases and respond to potential violations, as well as the lack of effective judicial remedies for persons whose rights have been allegedly violated. They point out that the rights of asylum seekers are inherently dependent on having human rights violations assessed by a court.

Overview of EU funds needed

A complete, public overview of EU funding to third countries to facilitate cooperation on migration issues remains unavailable, the report notes. MEPs call on the European Commission to ensure full transparency, including by establishing a clear overview of the EU funds used to finance cooperation with third countries in the field of migration management. They insist that the different EU tools must complement each other and work together coherently in order to avoid overlap and ensure a proper democratic scrutiny.

They also ask for detailed information on any other support measures provided by EU agencies such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, in order to ensure that the European Parliament can efficiently scrutinise how the EU budget is spent.

In addition, MEPs call on the EU to consider how it can ensure access to justice for persons affected by measures implementing cooperation between it and third countries on migration. An independent and accessible complaints mechanism could be set up to achieve this, they say.

Members also want to ensure that those who might suffer human rights violations in these circumstances can access effective legal remedies and therefore can obtain redress or reparation.

The text was approved by 43 votes in favour, 13 against, with 14 abstentions.

Quote

“Cooperation with third countries does not absolve the EU of meeting its human rights obligations towards migrants and refugees. These obligations must be fulfilled through better monitoring, more transparency on the use of EU funds and enhanced democratic oversight from the European Parliament. In addition, we must ensure access to justice for migrants and refugees whose rights may be affected by the EU’s cooperation with third countries. This is the only way to ensure that our external migration policy is compliant with international law”, said rapporteur [Tineke Strik](#) (The Greens/EFA, Netherlands) after the vote.

Next steps

The report will now be submitted to a vote in the European Parliament as a whole in plenary.

Additional information

The report was drafted by Members on the [European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights](#), led by Ms Strik.

Further information


[Procedure file](#)


[EP Multimedia Material: free photos, video and audio material](#)

Contacts

Viktor ALMQVIST

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 31834 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 72420 (STR)

 (+32) 470 88 29 42

 viktor.almqvist@europarl.europa.eu

 foreign-press@ep.europa.eu

 [@EP_HumanRights](https://twitter.com/EP_HumanRights)
