



World Humanitarian Day: MEPs call for Global Compact for Refugees

Statement by Enrique Guerrero Salom and Linda McAvan on World Humanitarian Aid Day, 19 August 2016

“On World Humanitarian Aid Day, as the world faces more numerous and complex crises and unprecedented levels of forced displacement, the European Parliament stresses that humanitarian assistance must remain guided by humanitarian principles and calls for political solutions to end conflicts and to ensure fairer sharing of responsibility for refugees.

As conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen or Afghanistan continue unabated, millions of people are forced to leave their homes; global forced displacement last year surpassed 65 million of people. This global challenge requires comprehensive, sustainable solutions and a more equitable sharing of responsibility: 86 % of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries, whilst the six richest countries – representing half of the world’s economy – host less than 9 % of refugees and asylum seekers.

Today, the European Parliament calls on the EU and its Members States and on the international community to make sure that the UN High Level Meeting on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants on 19 September establishes an ambitious, concrete and actionable Global Compact for Refugees. This Compact must ensure the protection of displaced populations, provide more support for refugee-hosting countries and increase durable solutions and a fairer sharing of responsibility by increasing resettlement programmes to reach at least 10% of the global refugee population.

War and displacement in the EU’s neighbourhood occupy the headlines. As the world’s largest donor, the EU needs to mobilise sufficient resources to respond to crises, including forgotten and protracted ones. It must also ensure that humanitarian assistance remains firmly anchored on the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. In displacement crises humanitarian aid is often the first response for affected people. Yet, the humanitarian aid system cannot bear alone the weight of these emergencies.

Whilst numerous instruments need to be mobilised to respond to the displacement crisis in the EU's neighbourhood, the European Parliament highlights that the response needs to be fully in line with international law and guided by the need to protect the lives and human rights of refugees. Development assistance should be provided from the outset of an emergency to reinforce basic services and support host communities, but it should maintain its overarching goal of poverty reduction and eradication, as provided by the Lisbon Treaty, not become a (dis-)incentive for other political objectives.

The European Parliament calls therefore on the EU and its Member States for a swift and effective implementation of the commitments made in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the World Humanitarian Summit, to build the resilience of partner countries, reduce vulnerability and risks, and make sure no one is left behind.”

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