



**Union of European Federalists**  
**Union Europäischer Föderalisten**  
**Union des Fédéralistes Européens**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UEF FEDERAL COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GLOBAL, COMPREHENSIVE AND WELL-BALANCED EUROPEAN RESPONSE FOR THE CURRENT ASYLUM AND MIGRATION CRISIS**

**Adopted by UEF Federal Committee, Venice on 29 November 2015.**

Bearing in mind that:

Since March 2015, the European Union has faced the most important asylum and migration crisis in its history: So far, 710.000 unauthorised border crossings have been registered by end of October 2015, 120.000 lives have been saved and up to 3000 persons have lost their lives in an attempt to reach Europe. 504.210 people applied for asylum in the EU Member States, among them 97.705 Syrians. As reported by the media, throughout the summer of 2015, Greece has become the main entry route for Syrian and Afghans refugees and the country has already recorded more than 480.000 arrivals. Germany is accepting more than 800.000 asylum applications, and Sweden will follow with more than 190.000 asylum applications for 2015. Among the new arrivals, 35.000 are unaccompanied minors, while more than 3000 undocumented migrants have tried to cross the Channel looking for work in the UK despite the announcement by the British government of anew legislation criminalising illegal work in the country.

In addition, to the Central Mediterranean route to Egypt and Libya and across to Italy, during the last few months the asylum and migration crisis has also begun to affect land borders. Borders function similarly to interconnected vessels for those who succeed in reaching the Greek islands and who board trains and busses and continue their journey through the land border onwards, to FYROM, Serbia, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia towards northern Europe, with little assistance from NGOs and very poor reception facilities from the countries they cross.

This sudden rise in the number of people who are forced to flee their homes to escape violence and seek refuge, in their own countries or abroad, is a test for the European Union, despite the fact that the numbers are still limited in comparison with global asylum flows. In fact, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in 2014 the world saw 60 million refugees and internally displaced people around the globe.

Four years after the Arab spring and the beginning of the protests against president Bashar al-Assad's government, the Syrian refugee crisis, has been transformed in to a crucial part of a much larger, global issue for which Europe's response was fragmentary and badly managed due to the limited mechanisms in place and the absence of a truly European asylum policy.

The European Union has been unprepared for facing the enormous challenges posed by the refugee crisis, having refused to strengthen its policies in the field of migration, asylum policies, border control, the fight against organized crime, but also foreign policy, and in particular its European Neighbourhood Policy.

Since the starting of the conflict in Syria in 2011, more than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives and half of Syria's population has been displaced either internally or externally. The war in Syria represents a huge driver of the refugee flows. Globally one in five refugees is Syrian.

Geopolitical turmoil, wars, conflicts, poverty, natural disasters, climate change are pushing people to move out of desperation and hope and this is a global phenomenon: global challenges call for a European response.

In addition, until now EU strategies were not able to fight effective irregular migration. In the area of return EU action has been fragmentary with very limited results as according to Eurostat in 2013, over 430.000 non-EU-citizens were issued with an order to leave an EU Member State, 43% of whom were recorded as being returned to a non-EU country (185.090 persons).

During this unprecedented humanitarian crisis, it is important to underline the huge mobilisation of citizens in all EU Member States supporting refugees, expressing their solidarity and the importance they attach to the respect for EU values and Fundamental Rights. In particular, as reported in the media, the reaction of citizens in frontline states facing huge financial, social and political difficulties has been outstanding as they were the ones who would be called forth to act as first respondents for the whole European Union.

In fact, as confirmed by the summer 2015 Eurobarometer publication, migration and asylum have become the number one preoccupation of EU citizens, ahead of the economic crisis. In particular, 73% of Europeans are clearly in favour of a common European policy on migration and asylum, although 56% are still reluctant about immigration of people from outside the EU.

At a political level, Chancellor Angela Merkel and President François Hollande made an appeal on 24 August for a "single asylum system" and Germany has suspended the implementation of the Dublin *acquis* in order to be open to process Syrian asylum applications quickly. However, not all EU Member States share the same positive and constructive attitude, some have opted for a "closed borders Europe" approach/policy, they have stood firm on their policy of deterrence and paved the way for the build-up of "Fortress Europe". In particular, whereas a candidate country such as Serbia has publicly stated it will allow asylum applications and rushed to set up refugee facilities, Hungary revised its asylum legislation, criminalised people looking for protection, constructed a fence along its border with Serbia in an attempt to stem the arrival of refugees. These negative reactions are based on various arguments, from unemployment and financial crisis to the overwhelming Christian populations. In fact the underlying fear for many EU Member States is cultural and has to do with the difficulties of integration of a predominantly Muslim population in European societies. This fear is further compounded by phenomena such as jihadism or radicalisation.

Considering that the current migration and asylum crisis is of a mixed nature, comprising economic migration on one side and "forced migration" of asylum seekers on the other side, since May 2015 the European Institutions have proposed and adopted several measures responding to the different urgent needs: improving solidarity and internal systems of reception for refugees and reinforcing return policy, fighting against smugglers including incentives to stay in the countries of origin for economic migrants.

In particular, in May and September 2015, the European Commission presented two "migration packages" listing concrete measures aimed at responding to the emergency needs faced in particular by frontline EU Member States. In September, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution focusing on asylum issues which lists concrete actions from the revision of the existing *acquis* to the development of sustainable peaceful solutions for armed conflicts via political dialogue and international cooperation. Since April 2015, several European Council meetings focused on the asylum and migration crisis, have validated crucial political decisions aimed at addressing the emergency needs.

Until now, European Union actions have been composed of operational measures (such as the relocation scheme of 160.000 people looking for international protection, establishment of hotspots in Greece and Italy, resettlement of 20.000 refugees from third countries, the adoption of Action Plan on return), actions focused on the effective monitoring of the implementation of EU law and new legislative proposals (list of Safe Countries of Origin), budgetary support (with a total amount of 9.2 billion euros for addressing the refugee crisis in 2015/2016), as well as external dimension actions for tackling the root causes (such as the Action plan for Turkey, the Trust Funds for Syria and Africa as well as the EU Action Plan against Smuggling).

Despite the progress made and the ongoing initiatives and efforts, it is evident that the EU has spent too much time building a fragile emergency response mechanism for the management of the current humanitarian crisis convincing reluctant EU Member States to accept to be part of the solidarity mechanism (all the long discussions about mandatory relocation quotas) and very little time overseeing a more sustainable and comprehensive management of migration and asylum, namely by the establishment of a truly common European asylum space and a Common EU system for migrants.

As the most difficult winter months approach, it becomes even more problematic to find acceptable solutions for refugees and in particular the most vulnerable among them (children, elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant women). Europe needs to find a well-balanced system to address the need for protection and the need for secure borders and regulated migratory flows. To do this there is the need for a clear political will to overcome financial, cultural and structural differences amongst EU Member States and to develop a new global response to the management of the migration and asylum challenges.

Therefore, as a follow-up to the previous resolutions adopted by UEF in 2012 and in April 2015, the Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists, meeting in Venice on 28-29 November 2015,

calls on the European Union's institutions and governments:

to forge a united and comprehensive strategy that integrates the external and internal dimensions of migration management and tackles the roots of the refugee crisis, in full respect of international law and promotion of human rights together and in cooperation with partners at the regional and global level;

to recall that the first priority of any EU action is to save lives and to do everything necessary to rescue refugees, protect whose lives are at risk in the desert or at sea, respect the dignity of persons, regardless of their legal status.

At external level:

to act immediately to stop this human tragedy by stepping up the diplomatic work to pose an end to conflicts in our neighbourhood, from Ukraine to Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq, in order to rebuild the regional stability both in Europe's East and in the Middle East and North Africa;

to continue working together with countries of origin or transit of migration flows at the bilateral and regional level, including through the Rabat, Khartoum, Budapest and Prague Processes, the ACP-EU Dialogue, the EU-Africa Migration and Mobility Dialogues, as decided at the Valletta Conference of November 11-12, in order to create peace, stability and economic development in those countries, but also to organise legal migration channels and fighting trafficking of migrants and irregular migration;

to urgently forge a united and comprehensive strategy for fighting against the so-called Islamic State and other terrorist networks in Syria, Iraq and Libya in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy;

to develop a comprehensive response for tackling irregular migration and refugees flows considering the establishment of reception and protection capabilities in countries of origin, EU countries of first entry and in non-EU transit countries based on existing best practices, the organisation of air and sea transportation from transit countries to Europe, to stop the tragic loss of lives at sea and fight against human traffickers;

to use the relevant financial instrument available for increasing funding to the UNHCR, the World Food Programme and to those countries in the region that receive large numbers of refugees and invite the EU Member States to step up their contributions;

to increase the EU Member States' contribution to the "Syria Trust Fund" and the "Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration in Africa";

to coordinate the support of the EU and its Member States to transit countries in their efforts toward empowering the refugees in the long term, providing them with the means to establish a decent existence: food, healthcare, education, employment;

to better use the CSDP instruments to address the challenges of mixed migratory flows, in particular by strengthening the mandates of existing CSDP missions and by setting up a new horizontal civilian CSDP mission with a flexible mandate, as proposed by Germany and the Netherlands, which can work closely with Frontex;

to work closely with Turkey to establish a strong cooperation for managing the refugee crisis and especially combating the smugglers in the framework of the EU-Turkey joint action plan. However, it stresses that further steps in the accession talks shall not proceed without an improvement of Turkey's rule of law and respect of fundamental rights and freedoms;

to support the Western Balkans countries in dealing with the flows of refugees, as the flux risk increasing instability in this fragile region with weak institutions, including the possibility of relocating refugees from these countries to the European Union, and also by giving new impetus to the enlargement process;

to work within the international community to achieve a political solution to the crisis in Syria, by supporting a UN led process based on the mutual understanding agreed in Vienna, on October 30, 2015, by China, Egypt, the EU, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and the United States;

to support, as a short-term goal, the establishment of humanitarian zones accepted by all sides in Syria in order to manage humanitarian aid delivery;

to encourage partner countries to become Parties to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and the UN Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air;

to take migration aspects into account in the discussions for the new Global Strategy and in the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, both in its Eastern and Southern dimensions. The time has come for the European Union's institutions and governments to tackle the pitfalls in the

Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy to enable the EU to act as a security provider for its citizens and to respond to today's challenges;

At internal level:

to re-establish as soon as possible the freedom to travel within the Schengen area. Border controls can and may only be temporary. Member States must use this time to immediately implement a coherent common policy.

to support the establishment of a crisis emergency mechanism for massive influxes of refugees and migrants defining clear criteria for its activation at the EU level –in the meantime, the EU should revise and extend the current EU Civil Protection Mechanism based on the EU Member States substantial contributions, in order to mobilise the maximum of in-kind assistance in real terms for providing various types of emergency in-kind assistance (including teams, equipment, expertise). Neighbouring third countries should be encouraged to join the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and assistance in third countries should be combined with humanitarian aid under clearly defined rules, ensuring a coherent European response to massive flow of refugees and migrants;

to support the establishment of a European Asylum Authority which will put an end to the current asylum shopping phenomenon. In the meantime, the EU should intensify efforts for the quick revision of the Dublin III Regulation, based on relocation experience. In addition, mutual recognition mechanism should be introduced reinforcing trust among EU Member States and improving the management of the current asylum crisis faced by certain EU Member States. The EU should also consider the adoption of common rules for issuing humanitarian visas, the establishment (by EU funding) of mobile/temporary consular representation -common asylum offices in third countries for strengthening legal ways to entry for people in need of international protection and reducing the loss of lives of migrants at sea and the abuses of smuggling networks;

to develop an ambitious legal migration policy based on a precise assessment of the long-term economic and demographic challenges the EU faces (ageing population, sustainability of welfare systems and sustainable growth of the EU economy). A comprehensive legal migration and integration policy would contribute to fighting against radicalisation, racism and xenophobia. In the meantime the EU should propose concrete measures in policy areas where there is a need for specific action (domestic workers, nurses, tourism industry) in cooperation with business, trade unions and other social partners. The EU should set up an Action Plan fighting various forms of severe labour exploitation and the root causes of illegal work/exploitation, increasing awareness among the general public and business-social partners and setting up labour inspectors/law enforcement officers investigating cases of abuses, reporting and protecting victims;

to support the establishment of a European Border Protection Service, based on the experience gained by Frontex the last years from joint operations, the roll-out of EUROSUR, the cooperation between civilian and military authorities for maritime borders, the hotspot approach, the common risk assessments, the common training activities. In the meantime, the EU should speed-up the adoption of smart border packages, the consolidation of Union standards on border management (including provisions for massive asylum applications at the external borders), the extension of Frontex's mandate, and the creation of European Border and Coast Guards;

to ensure the effective implementation of all actions included in the EU Action Plan on Return, promoting the voluntary return actions (instead of costly forced return actions), ensuring systematic monitoring of return actions and developing alternative to detention (based on Court of Justice case law). Improvement and rapid return actions taken in the framework of Hotspot activities should be in compliance with Fundamental rights obligations, considering that the EU has

extremely progressive legal provisions on Return policy and has developed far more advanced norms than those applied in other regions of the world. The EU should also re-evaluate the current EU-Readmission Agreements and ensure a close monitoring of these texts, before negotiating new EU Readmission Agreements.

Finally:

to strengthen the internal and external coordination and coherence among EU Member States, EU bodies and institutions involved in the management of Migration and Asylum , setting up an Annual Forum for dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders developing a medium-term responsible, regular, orderly and safe EU Migration and Asylum Policy.