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Migration and Schengen border controls

Commission must defend spirit of Schengen and ensure common European interest prevails

The European Commission today presented a communication on migration policy, including its response to migration from North Africa and proposals on the Schengen acquis. The Greens have expressed concern at attempts by EU member states to scale back Schengen and welcome proposals by the Commission to ensure a European approach to decisions on border controls. Commenting on the communication, Green MEP **Jean Lambert** said:

"The European Commission has today brought a voice of reason back to the debate on migration and border controls. Responding to knee-jerk calls by certain member states by scaling back the provisions of the Schengen system would be a failure on multiple fronts. We welcome that the Commission is looking to strengthen, rather than dismantle the Schengen system.

"Reintroducing border controls would not only undermine the spirit of Schengen, it would also completely fail to address the current challenges posed by increased migration from North Africa. The Commission is right in proposing that decisions on introducing border controls should be taken at EU, rather than national, level and that they should be taken only in exceptional circumstances and be temporary. This will help avoid leaving such decisions at the mercy of knee-jerk populist politicians.

"Clearly, we need a more comprehensive response to the recent increase in migration from North Africa. We call on the Commission to urgently invoke the EU Temporary Protection Directive (1) or present a concrete alternative proposal to address the situation with regards to the influx of people seeking refuge from the current instability in the Mediterranean region. It is worth remembering that Tunisia and Egypt have had to cope with at least ten times the number of people we have seen so far in the EU."

(1) Temporary protection is a procedure of an exceptional character during an emergency situation that involves a mass influx of displaced persons. Directive 2001/55/EC aims to harmonise temporary protection for displaced persons in cases of mass influx on the basis of solidarity between Member States (chapter VI of the Directive). The directive envisages a number of obligations towards beneficiaries of temporary protection, including residence permit for the entire duration of the stay (Article 8) that is granted for at least one year with the possibility of extension, access to employment (Article 12), access to suitable accommodation (Article 13), access to education for minors (Article 14) as well as the possibility

of family reunification (Article 15).

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Responsible MEPs



Jean Lambert

Member

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