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Refugees and asylum policy

EU better equipped to assist refugees and play a more proactive global role after EP vote

The European Parliament has today adopted new EU legislation aimed at assisting EU member states in improving their ability and capacity to receive refugees. The legislation, which was steered through Parliament by Green MEP and draftsman Rui Tavares, includes changes to the European Refugee Fund to take account of a new joint resettlement fund. Commenting on the adoption of the legislation, **Rui Tavares** stated:

"By approving these new rules, MEPs are ensuring the EU is better equipped to play a more positive role in assisting refugees and alleviating the impacts of crises in critical regions in the world. Despite no shortage of rhetoric, member states do not really live up to expectations: the EU takes in only around 4,500 of the 200,000 refugees that need resettling in the world each year. By comparison, the US resettles around 80,000, and even countries like Brazil and Chile have done a lot in the past few years. Europe needs to remember where it came from - we once also produced large numbers of refugees - and contribute its fair share of this global effort.

"Under the proposals approved by the EP today, the EU will play a more active role in assisting refugees through the new joint resettlement programme, which aims to resettle people in the EU who have been granted refugee status in third countries that lack the capacity to offer proper protection.

"In order to facilitate this, the scope of the European Refugee Fund, which provides financial assistance to EU member states to support resettlements, will be extended to ensure a wider group of vulnerable persons can be eligible. These priority groups include children, women at risk, unaccompanied minors, survivors of violence and torture, and people with serious medical needs. For the first time, member states will receive funding for each person resettled.

"Hopefully, this will ensure the EU does more to address the plight of refugees and deal with the impacts of global crises. While it is frustrating that procedural delays have effectively led to two lost years of resettlement for the most vulnerable people in the world, hopefully member states will now take advantage of the European Refugee Fund and start sustainable resettlement programmes as well as increasing their pledges."

(1) In order to encourage more member states to take part in resettlement actions, additional financial support will be given to beginner member states: €6,000 for each resettled person in the first year and

€5,000 in the second. In subsequent years the fixed amount will be €4,000 for each resettled person. Additionally, there are new rules on strategic focus of action in critical regions of the world, new and clearer categories of refugees to be resettled, and (in the own initiative report) actions and benchmarks for helping with and assessing the quality of the integration efforts by member states in resettlement of refugees.

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