

Beat: News

Advancing on a European approach to migration

European Commission in Calais

Calais, 31.08.2015, 19:30 Time

USPA NEWS - European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs Dimitris Avramopoulos visited Calais, alongside French Prime Minister Manuel Valls and Minister of Interior Bernard Cazeneuve.

Today, the European Commission announced financial aid to support France to help address the situation in Calais. During the visit, the Commission welcomed the concrete actions put forward by the French and British authorities in their joint declaration on managing migratory flows in Calais, in particular the pledges to take additional steps to act against criminal networks of smugglers who prey on migrants, to develop a fast-track process for assessing asylum claims, to ensure the adequate protection of the most vulnerable, and to ensure the return of those migrants who have no right to stay in the EU.

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "The situation in Calais requires above all common and resolute action. For the situation is but a symptom, amongst others in Europe, of a larger crisis. It is a crisis of European dimension and that requires a European response. Calais can and should be an example of how durable and courageous solutions can form this European response, addressing the challenge from all angles. We must act with humanity towards those in need of our protection, with solidarity and responsibility towards fellow European countries and with rigour in the application of our common EU rules." [?]

Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "The Commission is showing once more that Europe is capable of putting solidarity into practice. This emergency funding will help reduce the high pressure in Calais and offer humanitarian assistance to migrants living in rough conditions. But we need to do more than respond to immediate emergencies: we need to advance on the concrete proposals the Commission put on the table. In this respect, I welcome the Luxembourgish presidency's decision to hold an extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council on 14 September to discuss next measures that need to be taken and implemented to address the unfolding migration crisis jointly."

In response to a request for emergency assistance, the Commission agreed to allocate €5.2 million in emergency assistance funding under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to set up a tent site offering humanitarian assistance to around 1500 illegal migrants residing in the area surrounding the day centre "Jules Ferry" and to support the transport of asylum seekers from Calais to other locations in France. This assistance complements the €266 million granted for the period 2014-2020 to finance long-term actions in the area of asylum, migration and integration and the €3.8 million in emergency funding already granted in 2014 to co-finance the establishing of the "Jules Ferry" day centre.

The Commission reaffirmed its strong commitment to continue delivering on every aspect of the European Agenda on Migration and to translate into concrete actions the common approach, which received the backing of Heads of State and Government at the European Council in April.

Background

On 23 April 2014, in Malta, Jean-Claude Juncker presented a five point plan on immigration, calling for more solidarity in the EU's migration policy as part of his campaign to become European Commission President.

Upon taking office, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker entrusted a Commissioner with special responsibility for Migration to work on a new policy on migration as one of the 10 priorities of the Political Guidelines, the political programme based on which the European Parliament elected the Commission. Based on a proposal by the European Commission, in a European Council statement of 23 April 2015, Member States committed to taking rapid action to save lives and to step up EU action in the field of migration.

On 13 May 2015, the European Commission presented a European Agenda on Migration outlining the immediate measures that were taken in order to respond to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean as well as the steps to be taken in the coming years to better manage migration in all its aspects.

Source: Daren Frankish Media | European Commission & European Council

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-5089/advancing-on-a-european-approach-to-migration.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Daren Frankish - European Commission

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619