

Model European Union Conference (MEUC) 2016



Romania's Position

on

A New Mandate for the EU's Asylum Agency

Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office

Communication COM(2016) 197 final from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe

Proposal 2016/0131 (COD) for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010

In response to the ongoing migration and refugee crisis, the Commission will continue to provide support to Member States to stem disorderly irregular migration flows, protect national and European external borders, and safeguard the integrity of the Schengen area. The EU's asylum agency will be extremely important in this process and shall facilitate the proper functioning of the Common European Asylum System (EASO). Therefore, it is time to discuss the new mandate for the EU's asylum agency suggested by the European Commission.

The position of Romania with regard to a new mandate for the EU's asylum agency is an European, constructive and solitary position, grounded on the principles of the humanitarian tradition of the European Union and a fair sharing of responsibility. The overall objective is to promote legal migration for the benefit of all parties: the Romanian society, immigrants and their states of origin; to strengthen the legality of third-country nationals stay in Romania and the proper enforcement of removal and restrictive measures; and to improve the national asylum system in order to improve legal standards and ensure compliance with national, European and international rules. In this context, Romania considers that there are three key aspects Europe must take into consideration when addressing the migration and refugee crisis.

Romania is not ready for large-scale immigration.

Almost 85% of Romanians would not want refugees/immigrants to settle in Romania, according to an INSCOP study conducted between March 21 and March 28. The percentage is higher than the one registered in November (80.2%)

and September 2015 (65.3%). Only 11% agree with Romania welcoming refugees (down from 16.1% in November and 26.5% in September).

Those who seek or have been granted protection shall not have the right to choose in which Member State they want to settle. It must be clear that asylum shall only be granted while migrants cannot return to their countries of origin due to civil war and widespread violence. Refugees must be willing to integrate themselves in Romanian society during their stay. They must learn the Romanian language and respect Romanian traditions.

Romania does not have the necessary resources to accept large numbers of refugees, nor does it have available facilities to house refugees and personnel to process such a huge number of asylum applications. The country is struggling with economical problems and will not be able to provide refugees a good standard of living.

The lack of financial resources makes efficient border controls and especially the expulsion of illegal immigrants to their country of origin very difficult. Though the problem of illegal immigration is growing, there seems to be no significant progress in the field of border controls.

The European Union can only expect Romania to take in more refugees if Romania is allowed to join the Schengen area. These points must be taken into consideration by the European authorities.

The refugee crisis is a shared responsibility of the international community as a whole.

The responsibility for protection of asylum applicants should not only be placed on the EU as a whole, but equally on the international community. The EU will have to strengthen its cooperation with key third countries to ensure better and more comprehensive management of migration and mobility. The European Union should continue to grant financial and logistic support for countries which have already sheltered refugees, especially Turkey and Jordan.

The key to solving Europe's refugee crisis lies in Syria, not Brussels.

For these and other short-term measures to have lasting impact, they need to be part of a wider approach that also sufficiently addresses the underlying issues that could stem the future flow of refugees and irregular migrants over the longer term. Greater efforts are required to provide people at risk with protection and assistance in their own countries – so that they don't have to flee their homelands in the first place.

Through substantial investment in source countries in the region that targeted economic development and institutional reform, it should be possible over the longer term to bring about the stability and prosperity that might lead to improved human development indicators. However, this commitment must be matched by other developed economies and multilateral institutions. Funding must also be targeted at interventions that contribute to systemic reform in key countries, improving skills and employability, promoting stability and the institutions that are vital for prosperity, providing positive opportunities for young people, supporting entrepreneurship and strengthening education and civil society.

More specifically, the EU should extend its restrictive measures to put pressure on the Syrian Government to end violence. Our objective is to bring an end to the conflict and enable the Syrian people to live in peace in their own country. If there were any reasonable prospect that the fighting might end soon, many would prefer to return to their homes and rebuild their lives rather than embark on a new life in Europe.

In conclusion, Romania believes that the new mandate for the EU's asylum agency must:

- strengthen the legality of third-country nationals entitled to refugee status to stay in Romania and the proper enforcement of removal and restrictive measures;
- make clear that refugee status is temporary;
- preferably introduce a system of voluntary migrant quotas for each Member State. Member States must be aware of their responsibilities in the European Union based on population size and economic development;
- lead to a harmonized European approach to the refugee crisis;
- respect national sovereignty and not foresee any new powers for the EU's asylum agency, such as to operate a refugee distribution mechanism; and
- not require Member States to provide any further substantial financial aid to the Agency.

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