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Resettlement of refugees: an efficient tool for greater solidarity in Europe

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Numbers of refugees are increasing partly as a result of the Arab Spring and political changes in the African continent. These unpredicted events brought new challenges regarding reception of asylum seekers but also the resettlement procedure.

Resettlement is the process through which refugee individuals or families are identified, legally documented and assisted to restart their lives in another country. It consists in the relocation of refugees from one State in which they have sought asylum to another State which has agreed to admit them as refugees and to grant them settlement on its territory. This process is regarded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as one of the durable solutions offered to refugees whose needs for protection have already been established. Resettlement has three objectives: providing access to protection, ensuring a durable solution and enhancing solidarity between States.

In its Resolution 1820 (2011) on "Asylum seekers and refugees: sharing responsibilities in Europe", the Parliamentary Assembly called all the member States to "*accepting, as a priority, relocation within Europe from countries under strain, prior to or after the asylum determination process, and resettlement from countries outside Europe in full co-operation with the UNHCR*". Although the European Union calls for more solidarity and gives financial means through the European Refugee Fund, European States are not fully engaged in this process. Indeed, in 2010, European countries resettled only 5 824 refugees compared with 54 077 resettled by the United States and 6 732 by Canada alone.

Resettlement should involve every member State of the Council of Europe. The Assembly should look into the way the resettlement procedure is designed and how European States operate in the field.

