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Resettlement of refugees: promoting greater solidarity

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2059 (2014)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2059 (2014) on the "Resettlement of refugees: promoting greater solidarity" and has forwarded it to the relevant committees and bodies for information and comments.[2]The Committee recognises the importance of the issue addressed by the Assembly. In light of the uneven and mounting pressures on certain Council of Europe member States as regards irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, particularly at the external borders of the European Union, the Committee of Ministers concurs that it is essential to study methods of "solidarity and responsibility sharing".

2. The resettlement of refugees is an important humanitarian responsibility for Council of Europe member States and calls for constant international efforts. The Committee of Ministers notes that while many countries at the external borders of the EU are particularly concerned by the large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, other Council of Europe member States are also greatly affected. Turkey has shouldered the greatest number of Syrian refugees among the Council of Europe member States, by granting an estimated 1.7 million Syrian refugees temporary protection.

3. At the international level, work to address this problem and demonstrate solidarity, including by tackling the root causes of irregular migration, supporting States' capacity-building and border security to address these pressures, and combating exploitation by traffickers and people smugglers, continues to be a priority for States. The Committee of Ministers notes that despite increased efforts to address disparities between member States, the arrival of mixed migratory flows is continuing to place significant strain on some member States. It concurs that despite international efforts certain frontline Council of Europe member States are particularly affected by migratory phenomena.

4. For its part, the Committee of Ministers will consider the Assembly's proposal to hold a thematic debate on the issue of the resettlement of refugees in member States and notes the readiness of the Council of Europe Development Bank to participate in such a meeting. It recalls that Article II of the Articles of Agreement of the Bank states, *inter alia*, that "the primary purpose of the Bank is to help in solving the social problems with which European countries are or may be faced as a result of the presence of refugees, displaced persons and migrants…". Moreover, in the light of developments in other international organisations, the Committee of Ministers will continue to follow the situation and propose the expertise of the Council of Europe, where appropriate, with a view to enhancing international efforts to address resettlement issues and, as far as possible, the root causes of the rising levels of mixed migration flows towards Europe.

1. Adopted at the 1231st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (17 June 2015).
2. Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and Council of Europe Development Bank.