Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2164 (2017)[1]

Possible ways to improve the funding of emergency refugee situations

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines that the financing of humanitarian assistance in the context of the current migration and refugee crisis must be driven by the commitment to guaranteeing the fundamental human and social rights and dignity of the people afflicted by the current and protracted crises which have displaced tens of millions of people from their homes and countries as a consequence of war and other natural or man-made disasters.

2. The Assembly is aware that none of the humanitarian action, burden-sharing of resources or management of large-scale movements of people seeking asylum can be achieved efficiently without large financial appropriations by national governments in their own countries, by States with financial means donating to other States in need, and by international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private enterprise to the regions worst hit by the migration crises. While it is the political and moral responsibility of all European countries to contribute financial resources to dealing with the crises, according to the means at their disposal, they must also do their utmost to ensure that monies are spent where needs are greatest, keeping administrative costs and structural obstacles to a minimum while assuring accountability and transparency.

3. It is clear that the ongoing migration and refugee crisis has not only revealed shortcomings and divergences between European countries as regards burden-sharing, but has also exacerbated the weaknesses in the funding frameworks of the major international organisations in relation to humanitarian assistance, especially those of the United Nations and the European Union, which like Europe's regulatory frameworks have been tested and proved lacking.

4. The United Nations system of needs assessment prior to budget planning is very strained, with a growing gap between budget requirements and funding available and a year-long race to secure funds for planned activities, often in competition with other United Nations-funded sectors. Currently, this gap amounts to double-digit billions in euros, covering less than half the identified need. The European Union's recent increased focus on border control and "outsourcing" of humanitarian assistance beyond the European Union's borders may, if not solidly supported on the ground, endanger the protection of the basic rights of migrants and refugees. In member States, despite constant demonstrations of popular solidarity, difficult domestic economic and political contexts inspire hostility and rejection.

5. The Assembly regrets that the complex decision-making and budgetary procedures and slow implementation of European Union programmes on the ground leads to situations where assistance does not allow infrastructure to be put in place and those in need to receive assistance in a timely manner.

6. It welcomes the smaller-scale but important humanitarian assistance provided through other channels, for instance the targeted loans of the Council of Europe Development Bank, which allow rapid and concrete action to be taken, especially for reception conditions and well-being of migrants and refugees. Private funding, in particular through formal or informal diaspora networks, is an important element of funding for emergencies.

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 27 April 2017 (17th Sitting) (see Doc. 14283, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Cezar Florin Preda). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 April 2017 (17th Sitting).

7. In view of the need to address the seriousness of the current migration and refugee crisis by sharing the financial burden while ensuring that spending is driven by humanitarian concerns balanced out by the need to preserve the security and well-being of European citizens, the Assembly:

7.1. supports member States which devote a considerable part of their budget to managing migration, especially countries of reception in the front line of mass arrivals;

7.2. encourages all European States to step up the financial burden-sharing of the current situation, including through international frameworks for co-operation such as those of the European Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international humanitarian organisations;

7.3. calls on the European Union to continue its diversified funding to improve reception conditions, accelerate asylum procedures and encourage short- and medium-term integration of migrants and refugees, alongside additional measures to reinforce security, border controls and returns systems;

7.4. encourages member States to contribute to the resources of the Migrant and Refugee Fund set up by the Council of Europe Development Bank to continue to support emergency measures;

7.5. urges the United Nations and its member States to do their utmost to fulfil the “Grand Bargain” agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. In doing so, the UNHCR should ensure in particular:

7.5.1. greater transparency, harmonised and simplified reporting requirements and the reduction of duplication and management costs;

7.5.2. data streamlining, with joint and impartial needs assessments by specialists;

7.5.3. more support and funding for local and national actors and the reduction of administrative barriers to partnerships;

7.5.4. increased use and co-ordination of cash-based programming;

7.5.5. increased collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding of humanitarian action;

7.5.6. a “participation revolution” to include people receiving aid in making decisions which affect their lives;

7.5.7. enhanced engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

8. The Assembly calls on the European Union to examine the possibility of national debt relief in exchange for humanitarian commitments, especially as the economies of countries at Europe’s borders and therefore in the front line of the migration crisis (Greece and Italy for instance) are put under unprecedented pressure.