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Greece under pressure: Europe's front door for irregular migration

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Liana KANELLI and other members of the Assembly

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

Greece is currently seen as the front door for irregular migration into the European Union, not only through its borders with Turkey, but also due to its vast coastline and myriad of islands. Local authorities on the Greek islands are preparing for a major increase in the number of people fleeing violence in Syria, and Greece has asked Frontex to increase sea and air patrols of the islands in the north eastern Aegean.

Greece is having to struggle with an economic crisis at the same time as having to deal with irregular migration and asylum as a front line state. This has had a number of consequences, including an upsurge of racist violence and an increase in support for the extremist party Golden Dawn.

In September 2012, the Greek government announced a toughening of its measures against irregular migrants. The recent operation Xenios Zeus was introduced with the apparent goal of returning undocumented migrants to their countries of origin and reinforcing the rule of law and social stability in Greece.

The country has been subjected to much external and internal criticism for its handling of migrants and migration issues. Not only are racially motivated attacks and extremist violence against migrants increasing in society but Greece is facing difficulties coping with European standards in terms of reception and detention conditions. It also has problems remedying the shortcomings of its national asylum system, as shown by case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

The Parliamentary Assembly should look into the situation of migrants and asylum seekers in Greece. This is not simply a Greek problem, it is a European problem and presents a test case for European solidarity on how to deal with issues at its external borders and their related consequences.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

KANELLI Liana, Greece, UEL
ABBASOV Aydin, Azerbaijan, SOC
AGRAMUNT Pedro, Spain, EPP/CD
BILOZIR Oksana, Ukraine, EPP/CD
BONDARENKO Olena, Ukraine, EPP/CD
DÍAZ TEJERA Arcadio, Spain, SOC
DOBBIN Jim, United Kingdom, SOC
FIALA Doris, Switzerland, ALDE
HÜBINGER Anette, Germany, EPP/CD
KHADER Qais, Palestinian National Council
KYRIAKIDOU Athina, Cyprus, SOC
MARIANI Thierry, France, EPP/CD
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
MENDES BOTA José, Portugal, EPP/CD
PAPADIMOULIS Dimitrios, Greece, UEL
PIPILI Foteini, Greece, EPP/CD
RZAYEV Rovshan, Azerbaijan, EPP/CD
SABELLA Bernard, Palestinian National Council
SANTINI Giacomo, Italy, EPP/CD
TRANTAFYLLOS Konstantinos, Greece, SOC
TZAKRI Theodora, Greece, SOC
VIROLAINEN Anne-Mari, Finland, EPP/CD
VORUZ Eric, Switzerland, SOC

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left