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Missing refugee and migrant children in Europe

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Serap YAŞAR and other members of the Assembly

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

The most vulnerable group of migrants and asylum seekers are undoubtedly children. However, their life-threatening journey does not end after they enter Europe. Many of them get separated from persons who are responsible for their protection during their perilous journey. They also fall prey to smugglers and traffickers. As a result, a record number of refugee and migrant children go missing in Europe every year.

Europol drew attention to the gravity of this situation when it declared that 10.000 migrant children were unaccounted in the European Union in 2016. Germany's national investigative police agency, Bundeskriminalamt, reported on 1 July 2016 that authorities have lost trace of 8,991 children including 867 aged 13 or younger. Moreover, it is reported that up to 50% of unaccompanied migrant children go missing within 48 hours of being placed in certain reception centers in Europe. It is obvious that Europe is far from responding to this crisis in an adequate manner.

Council of Europe member States should do their utmost to reverse this alarming trend. Poor reception conditions, slow and complex procedures for protection and lack of co-ordination at national and cross-border level are underlying causes for this phenomena. Furthermore, finding themselves alone and in a strange place, the refugee children are easy preys to traffickers and smugglers.

The Parliamentary Assembly should examine in depth why refugee and migrant children in Europe go missing in such record numbers. The Assembly should investigate how current regulations could be improved to ensure that these children do not go missing. The Assembly should also critically analyse why most of the missing refugee and migrant children cannot be traced and found. Finally, the Assembly should highlight the good practices developed and encourage experience sharing between member States.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

YAŞAR Serap, Turkey, EC
BAYKAL Deniz, Turkey, SOC
BILDARRATZ Jokin, Spain, ALDE
CSÖBÖR Katalin, Hungary, EPP/CD
DI STEFANO Manlio, Italy, NR
FOULKES George, United Kingdom, SOC
GAFAROVA Sahiba, Azerbaijan, EC
GROTH Annette, Germany, UEL
HAJDUKOVIĆ Domagoj, Croatia, SOC
HUSEYNOV Vusal, Azerbaijan, EPP/CD
KESİCİ İlhan, Turkey, SOC
KÜÇÜKCAN Talip, Turkey, EC
MUNYAMA Killian, Poland, EPP/CD
PREDA Cezar Florin, Romania, EPP/CD
RIGONI Andrea, Italy, ALDE
ŞAHİN USTA Leyla, Turkey, EC
SANDBÆK Ulla, Denmark, UEL
SOCOTAR Gheorghe-Dinu, Romania, SOC
STIENEN Petra, Netherlands, ALDE
STRIK Tineke, Netherlands, SOC
STROE Ionuţ-Marian, Romania, EPP/CD
SUTTER Petra, De, Belgium, SOC
UYSAL Burhanettin, Turkey, EC

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group