

## For a European solution of the refugee crisis and a new EU strategy in the Southern Mediterranean region: Resolution of JEF Europe

Resolution submitted by: JEF PC3 – Foreign Relations and Global Europe

Many of the major challenges that the European Union is currently facing are coming from its neighbourhood. Conflicts and political turmoil in the Middle East and Northern Africa drives a massive flux of migrants to Europe, mostly asylum seekers. The European Union proved itself totally unprepared for facing this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Member States are reacting unilaterally, being mostly concerned about losing their sovereignty and their support in national public opinions. Their actions are ineffective and damaging to major European achievements, such as the Schengen Agreements. The Young European Federalists urges the EU to give a stronger common response to this global challenge, both in the field of migration, asylum policy and border control as short-term measures. A long-term solution necessarily concerns a common foreign policy, and a redefinition of the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean region.

JEF Europe,

- A. *Recalling* its past resolutions: “Managing immigration at European level” (2015) & “Security situation and humanitarian crisis in Syria” (2012);
- B. *Referring* to Art.8 TEU that commit the EU to develop a special relationship with its neighbours, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation,
- C. *Observing* that the EU’s policy towards its neighbours has so far failed its own scope of creating a “ring of friends” around its own territory,
- D. *Alarmed* by the five-year civil war in Syria and the political crisis in Libya,

- E. *Deploring* that the EU has been so far side-lined for its incapacity to develop a common strategy, speak with one voice and act consequently,
- F. *Noting* with deep concern that the geopolitical instability in the area, combined with the historical poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and growing negative effects of climate change, generated a massive flux of migrants coming to the EU,
- G. *Referring* to what the EU Commission considers a real risk of a humanitarian crisis, particularly in Greece, which lies on the front line of Europe's greatest refugee challenge since World War II,
- H. *Fully aware* that the numbers of arrivals in Europe keep increasing in 2016 despite the winter season,
- I. *Keeping in mind* that, especially considering the case of Syrian refugees, the closest neighbours to Syria, such as Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, are shouldering the heaviest burden of hosting refugees, even beyond their capacities,
- J. *Realising* that the EU has already adopted in 2015 concrete measures to respond to the growing emergency at the EU Borders, to which EU countries do not give the necessary contribution to make them being fully implemented,
- K. *Believing* that the EU must adopt a different approach in its Neighbourhood policy, because the level of conditionality EU can exercise with Southern countries is diminishing when there is no perspective toward accession to the EU,
- L. *Acknowledging* that cooperation on migration and mobility between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean partners has increased thanks to the establishment of Mobility Partnerships with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, and the Euro-African dialogue to organise legal migration channels and fight human trafficking
- M. *Keeping in mind* the importance of development assistance that plays a crucial role in tackling the root causes of migration,
- N. *Deploring* that the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, is barely receiving a total contribution of around €81.3 million by EU Member States, as well as €1.8 billion from the European Union financing instruments,
- O. *Bearing in mind* that the fundamental rights and duties of a human being declared in the European Convention of Human Rights and Universal Charter of Human Beings must be always respected,
- P. *Observing* that an operation is to be carried out in the Aegean Sea with the involvement of NATO warship is raising legal concerns to the full respect of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees,

Q. *Deeply regretting* that several proposals issued by the European Commission to cope with this global phenomenon, acting as a real Union, such as the permanent and temporary relocation mechanism and the creation of a European border- and coast-guard, has so far been obstructed and delayed by several Member States,

*Deploring* that major egoistic and nationalistic stances by several EU countries, driven by fear and mistrust, are putting at risk major achievements of the European integration process, such as the Schengen agreements,

JEF Europe,

1. *Believes* that a successful response to the migration crisis across the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean will only come from tackling the root causes, such as wars, violations of human rights, instability and poverty in European neighbourhood and beyond;
2. *Calls* on the EU and its Member States to step up as influential actors in the diplomatic process of achieving a sustainable political solution in Syria and for the institution building process to be successfully completed in Libya,
3. *Calls* for an EU policy for the Mediterranean region, ensuring a broad and intensified cooperation with third countries through multilateral and bilateral agreements in order to fight human trafficking networks,
4. *Calls* on the EU and its Member States to transform Frontex in a full-fledged European Border and Coast-Guard by increasing its economic resources and capacities to support national authorities in the protection of EU borders,
5. *Insists* on the need for rescue operations in the Mediterranean and in the Aegean Sea to save lives, and for an EU policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection which fully comply with binding obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and respect the non refoulement principle;
6. *Invites* the EU and its Member States to provide transit countries, in particular those on the Western Balkans route, with assistance and humanitarian supplies to be dedicated to the reception of refugees, using the EU Civil Protection Mechanism,
7. *Demands* the EU to ensure capacity building] of asylum system by setting common rules for a balanced return policy, for issuing humanitarian visas to refugees and for the establishment of common asylum offices in third countries, using the capacity EU delegations,

8. *Calls* on the EU to develop humanitarian legal ways to safely reach the EU, not being forced to rely on illegal human trafficking, as the first humanitarian corridor carried out by the Italian Government for 93 Syrian people from Lebanon transit camps;
9. *Encourages* the EU to open legal channels for economic migration and facilitate cross-border mobility for cultural and educational exchanges;
10. *Condemns* any proposal aimed at solving this refugee crisis by building walls and fences;
11. *Supports* the critical position expressed by UNHCR on the general terms agreed under the EU-Turkey joint action plan concerning the legal issues related to the full respect of provisions of 1951 Geneva Convention and to the poor guarantees the Turkish Government can offer regarding the respect of human rights and of the principle of non-refoulement,
12. *Calls* for the respect of Art. 78-79-80 TFEU, in particular when it invokes the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility between the Member States, considering, that only six out of twenty-eight EU Member States are now coping with 77% of all asylum requests to the EU;
13. *Calls* on EU Member States to stick to the agreed relocation programme and to implement it, furthermore calls on the European Commission to not refrain from infringement procedures against uncompliant Member States;
14. *Calls* on the EU to accelerate the outphasing of the Dublin regulations and adopt a fully European asylum policy;
15. *Underlines* that a common European response to the refugee crisis can only be achieved with a full inclusive dialogue in the EU, such as mini-summits among small group of EU and non-EU States, excluding the EU Commission and key Member States, which undermines the necessary cooperation and trust in the EU,
16. *Demands* from the EU and its Member States to take into consideration the results of recent surveys conducted by Eurobarometer and the Bertelsmann Institute showing that respectively 68% and 79% of respondents call for a European solution to the migration crisis,
17. *Realizes* the introduction of a more pragmatic approach in the ENP Review, based on tailor-made policies and aimed at responding to the different needs of each neighbour and with a specific focus on stabilization, risks to undermine its value of common policy, and additionally, its own capacity to exercise a normative conditionality to the neighbours,

18. *Highlights* that European States are increasingly digging into their development assistance budgets to meet rising spending linked to the reception and hosting of refugees, making it very difficult for them to keep their aid promises to third countries;
19. *Demands* a new approach toward EU-Africa relations to overcome the short-term vision and utilitarian policy adopted so far by Member States, by trading financial aid to African states with their acceptance of migrants to be returned;
20. *Invites* the European Union to increase cooperation with its Southern neighbours, by assisting those States, such as Tunisia, that experience a transition process to democracy and rely on the EU to sustain their political and social development, by increasing investments in the fields of education, culture, training and youth, through programmes such as Erasmus+, and other programmes aimed at developing “people-to-people” contacts,
21. *Commits* itself to promoting initiatives, similar to the Don’t touch my Schengen campaign and the letter to President Tusk, for reaching out to civil society organisations and European citizens to make them more aware of the need to invest on our principles and values, defend our achievements and fight fear and populism, because Europe is a point of reference of democracy and civil rights for non-European citizens, especially young people, who live at the EU borders,
22. *Encourages* the EB to explore possibilities to reach out to young migrants, and to find opportunities of cooperation and exchange with youth organizations from Southern Mediterranean countries.