

PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

DECISION

approving the opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance - Forced Displacement and Development* (COM(2016) 234)

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 67 and 148 of the Romanian Constitution, republished, of Law No 373/2013 on cooperation between Parliament and the Government in the area of European affairs, and of Articles 160 to 185 of the Rules of Procedures of the Chamber of Deputies, republished,

the Chamber of Deputies hereby adopts this Decision.

Sole Article. Having regard to Opinion No 4c-19/1014 adopted by the Committee for European Affairs at its meeting of 20 September 2016,

1. The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the Communication because:

- it proposes a legal framework that would enable displaced people to live in dignity as contributors to their host societies until their voluntary return or resettlement;
- at the same time, the Commission calls on the EU and its Member States to make a long-term commitment to do more to address the root causes of migration and displacement;
- it sets out a new development-oriented policy framework to address forced displacement in the form of recommendations;
- it looks into situations of protracted forced displacement in partner countries due to conflict, violence and human rights violations, irrespective of the status of the displaced under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;

2. The Chamber of Deputies supports the Communication because:

- as a result of the conflicts, violence and human right abuses currently unfolding in the world, there are more than 60 million refugees and internally displaced people who have been forcibly displaced, which is the highest level of forced displacement since World War Two;
- people who have acquired the status of refugees or displaced people from conflict areas have no development prospects and no opportunities to enjoy social and economic rights in the countries of origin or in the countries of reception;
- it acknowledges that in addition to legal protection, food and shelter, forcibly displaced people also need access to jobs and services such as healthcare, education and housing;
- the programmes intended for these groups seek to restore self-reliance, which is the ability of people, households or communities to meet their basic needs and to enjoy social and economic rights in a sustainable and dignified way, as provided for under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- it will help strengthen the link between humanitarian and development assistance by involving all policymakers in a timely manner in the design and implementation of consistent strategies and programmes, and will contribute to promoting regional cooperation, stepping up the exchange of

information and carrying out coordinated assessments, joint analytical frameworks, and coordinated programming and financial cycles.

3. The Chamber of Deputies takes the view that:

- the document is a new policy framework for displaced people, which will serve as a basis for a new, development-oriented approach to forced displacement;
- the document follows on from the Commission Communication on the role of EU external action in the current refugee crisis (JOIN (2015) 40), which calls on the EU and its Member States to make a long-term commitment to managing the causes of migration and displacement;
- that Communication also served as a preamble to the UN-led World Humanitarian Summit of May 2016, which marked the start of cooperation between the EU and its Member States and other global actors with a view to launching the Agenda for Humanity;
- forced displacement is a threat to progress and, from this point of view, refugees and internally displaced people become vulnerable people;
- a correct development-oriented approach must consider not only internally displaced people, refugees and displaced people but also their hosts, and must focus on their vulnerabilities and abilities;
- synergies are needed between humanitarian and development actors in terms of the exchange of information on analyses, programme implementation, financing predictability and flexibility, also at local level, where there is an increase in innovative responses, so as to foster the resilience and self-reliance of forcibly displaced people through quality education, access to economic opportunities and social protection;

4. The Chamber of Deputies takes the view that:

- most situations of protracted displacement lasting more than five years mainly stem from the delays in restoring peace in many countries of origin and the restrictive policies applied by the host countries, compounded by the latter's low capacity for hosting forcibly displaced people; climate change and the natural disasters that could occur also play a part, increasing the number of forcibly displaced people;
- in the new policy framework, which has been adapted to the current levels of forced displacement worldwide and which is intended to maximise the impact of EU support for refugees and internally displaced people, combating violence against women should be a priority;

5. The Chamber of Deputies points out that:

- the main response of the international community to the crisis situations that lead to forced displacement today should be reviewed and reshaped to reflect reality, as so far it has been based on the provision of humanitarian assistance and on the assumption that as soon as the initial crisis is resolved and the immediate needs are met, the responsibility for long-term solutions is passed on to national and international development actors;
- providing humanitarian assistance is vital, but not enough for a sustainable solution for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees;
- in the absence of other sustainable financing sources for development assistance, humanitarian assistance has often created aid dependence; the main challenges are linked to the lack of access to education, employment and basic services for forcibly displaced people and to the increasing difficulties encountered by the host communities in accessing such services;
- the social and economic contribution of forcibly displaced people to their host communities must also be considered, by expanding market outlets, increasing demand for goods and services and

importing new skills; ignoring this could create negative attitudes to refugees and internally displaced people among local communities and host governments;

- forced displacement has become a persistent, complex problem that puts immense pressure not only on displaced people themselves, but also on their host countries, governments and communities, and on donors. All of these constituencies share a responsibility to react; the pressure created by the influx and long-term stay of displaced populations is particularly acute on vulnerable communities, countries and regions;

6. The Chamber of Deputies considers that from Romania's point of view:

- practice has shown that the transition from emergency interventions and humanitarian assistance to development projects is not linear, but complex;

- in the absence of other sustainable financing sources for development assistance, humanitarian assistance has often created aid dependence; from this perspective, the main challenges are linked to the lack of access to education, employment and basic services for forcibly displaced people and to the increasing difficulties encountered by the host communities in accessing such services;

- promoting mutual trust between displaced people and members of their host communities could reduce and possibly eliminate long-term dependence on humanitarian aid, and could help enhance the resilience of both groups by increasing their ability to face future crises and changes;

- we have supported the adoption of the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on the EU approach to forced displacement and development at the meeting of 12 May 2016 of the ministers responsible for international development cooperation; on that occasion, Romania's representative highlighted the need for a consistent approach to the eastern and southern neighbourhood, which the new European Consensus on Development should reflect, particularly as regards security and credibility;

- development cooperation policy should be better linked to humanitarian aid policy in order to ensure that results are consistent, complementary and effective;

- Romania is providing humanitarian aid for refugees and for internally displaced people and displaced people, especially – given the limited resources available – through international organisations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Children's Fund;

- over the 2016-2019 period, we will contribute EUR 21.6 million to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey organised by the Commission based on these principles;

7. supports the substance of the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance - Forced Displacement and Development* (COM(2015) 185), as it is based on the idea that humanitarian aid saves lives by providing basic elements but is not a long-term solution.

This Decision was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies at its sitting of 4 October 2016 in compliance with Article 76(2) of the Romanian Constitution, republished.

Florin Iordache

President of the Chamber of Deputies,

Bucharest, 4 October 2016.

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