

Beat: Politics

EUROPEAN SUMMIT & TURKEY AGREED A COMMON UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE MIGRANT CRISIS

LARGE SCALE & FAST-TRACK RETURNS TO TURKEY

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USPA NEWS - Donald Tusk, President of European Council, is delighted with the closing of the Balkan routes used by the migrants from Syria and Iraq. The time of irregular immigration in Europe is over. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, says, after the European Summit three days ago.

"We have just finished a summit between Turkey and the European Union. We agreed that despite good implementation of the Joint Action Plan on migration, the flow of migrants passing from Turkey to Greece remains much too high and needs to be brought down significantly. I am happy that we have a common understanding with Prime Minister Davutoğlu on strengthening our cooperation so as to achieve concrete results on the ground within days."

Today we assessed the progress made so far. Last week's return of migrants from Greece to Turkey was the first visible step of the bilateral agreement becoming more operational and effective. Prime Minister Davutoğlu confirmed Turkey's commitment to accept the rapid return of all migrants coming from Turkey to Greece that are not in need of international protection. The EU will support Greece in ensuring comprehensive, large scale and fast-track returns to Turkey." Donald Tusk

LIBERALIZATION ROADMAP AND 3Bn EUROS FOR THE REFUGEE FACILITY FOR SYRIANS

We also welcomed the establishment of the NATO activity in the Aegean Sea and we look forward to its contribution to enhance intelligence and surveillance with a view to stemming migrant crossings. This operation will not work without Turkey's readiness to take back all irregular migrants who have been apprehended in Turkish waters. Today we were assured that this will be possible. All the above mentioned decisions send a very clear message that the days of irregular migration to the European Union are over.

Furthermore, we welcomed new, bold proposals made today by Turkey to further address this crisis. We agreed to work on the basis of the following principles:

the return of all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into the Greek islands;

the acceleration of the implementation of the visa liberalization roadmap;

the speeding up the disbursement of the 3Bn Euros and additional funding for the Refugee Facility for Syrians;

the preparation for the opening of new chapters in the accession negotiations;

the possibility of establishing in Syria areas which will be more safe;

And finally to resettle Syrian refugees on a one-for-one basis.

NEW STEP FORWARD AFTER A LONGER MEETING BETWEEN EU AND TURKEY TO REDUCE THE IRREGULAR FLOWS OF MIGRANTS

"I was assigned by leaders to take forward these proposals and work out the details together with the Turkish side before the next European Council. We also discussed with Prime Minister Davutoğlu the situation of the media in Turkey. We all know how important freedom of speech and expression are, these are fundamental human rights. Without them, there cannot be the healthy development of any culture, of any society. I am saying all this because we cannot stay indifferent to the concerns raised in this context about what is now happening in Turkey."

Finally, let me stress that our meeting lasted longer not only because of our talks with Turkey but also due to the fact that leaders had a number of important decisions to take. Firstly, I would like to announce the decision by the EU leaders to end the 'wave-through approach' which means that the irregular flow of migrants along the Western Balkan route have now come to an end. To facilitate this change, we agreed to help Greece and to deploy massive humanitarian assistance there. Emergency support to the very difficult humanitarian situation on the ground will be provided urgently. We will also offer further assistance in order to manage the external border in Greece, including those with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania. This is a collective EU responsibility and so Greece will not be left alone." Concludes Donald Tusk

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