

1236th meeting – 22-24 September 2015

Item 1.5

Thematic debate: “Migration challenges for Europe: need for collective action”

SG/Inf(2015)33

Decisions

The Deputies, in view of the gravity of the situation Europe is facing following the massive arrival of refugees provoked by war, terrorism and violations of human rights, the rule of law and democratic standards in their countries of origin,

1. whilst stressing the need to address the root causes of the crisis, welcomed the important efforts already made to help refugees, particularly by States which face the refugee flow in the front line;
2. reiterated the obligations falling upon member States under international law, in particular, the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as recalled by the Secretary General in his letter of 8 September 2015 to the Heads of Governments of member States;
3. affirmed that addressing the refugee crisis is a responsibility for all member States which they must face without any discrimination;
4. called on member States to intensify their efforts to address the crisis in compliance with international law;
5. also reiterated the obligations arising from the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and, in this context, called on those member States which have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the Convention and its Protocol;
6. emphasised that the Council of Europe must continue to monitor the honouring of commitments and obligations by its member States and asked the Secretary General to follow and report on the developing situation, making full use of existing monitoring mechanisms;
7. underlined the importance for the Council of Europe to provide assistance in its areas of expertise to those member States which so wish, using all the tools available to it, notably with a view to promoting exchanges of good practice at national, regional and local level;
8. welcomed the initiatives by the Secretary General to help member States to address the current crisis and in this connection noted with interest the initiative underway in the Council of Europe Development Bank;
9. emphasised the importance for the Council of Europe to work, in its areas of competence, in close co-operation with other relevant international organisations, including the United Nations, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant UN agencies, IOM, OSCE and the European Union;
10. called for the signature, ratification and implementation of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and underlined the ongoing work in the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) on this matter.