

## EMI MEMBERS COUNCIL MEETING

ATHENS, 11 APRIL 2014

## DRAFT RESOLUTION

**Safeguarding the EU's fundamentals and future: freedom of movement, asylum and immigration***The Freedom of Movement: A fundamental right of EU-citizens*

The right to work and move freely within the Union is a fundamental right of all EU citizens, going hand in hand with the free movement of goods, services and capital. These four fundamental freedoms constitute the core of European law and must be fully respected by all EU Member States and EEA states. Safeguards to prevent the exploitation of national social security systems are already in place on the European level and studies show that the vast majority of migrants from EU Member States and EEA states move to other EU countries to work, contributing on average 34% more to the fiscal system than they take out. Labour mobility within the single market is not only key for the economic recovery and success of Europe, but also one of the most appreciated benefits of the European Union directly affecting its citizens and businesses.

While intra-EU-migration doesn't constitute a problem on a large scale, it tends to concentrate in some municipalities, which can become overburdened by the influx of a large number of EU citizens. In such cases, rather than dispute the freedom of movement of persons as such, it is better to seek partnership with the individually affected municipalities in order to enable them to mitigate possible adverse effects. Furthermore, the best way to avoid poverty migration within the EU is to reduce poverty and social exclusion in sending countries, instead of closing the borders of receiving Member States and EEA states.

All political actors and institutions in the European Union and its Member States and EEA states must return to a fact based and responsible debate and abstain from exploiting the issue of free movement of persons for populist campaigns, which sows xenophobic and Eurosceptic sentiments.

*A European Asylum Policy*

Since 1993 more than 20.000 people have died while trying to reach the territory of the European Union. With numerous crises in the direct neighbourhood of the Union, the political instability in Northern Africa and the current civil-war in Syria, there is a constant stream of people willing to risk their life for the promise of a better future within the Union.

Refugees and asylum seekers are, first and foremost, human beings and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. This should be achieved once the revised Dublin regulation and the Common European Asylum System are correctly and fully implemented. These measures should be based on

clearer rules than now providing uniform and fair procedures as well as pragmatic reception conditions for migrants.

Despite these measures, Member States and EEA states that share the external borders of the EU are facing a growing influx of illegal immigrants, which puts significant pressure on their economies and societies. The principle of the Dublin regulation, according to which the country that a person first arrived in is responsible for dealing with the application, should therefore be replaced by a mechanism that ensures a fair burden-sharing among EU Member States and EEA states according to their economic and social capacities to host asylum seekers. This would be a sign of real European solidarity, and, at the same time, would contribute towards the good treatment of persons in need.

In order to better manage the number of asylum seekers in the future, the EU needs an integrated strategy aimed at eradicating the unbearable conditions that make people leave their home countries, such as poverty, war, social exclusion, poor health treatment and violation of human rights. This strategy must comprise all available instruments, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy, development policy, enlargement and neighbourhood policies and trade policy. Enhanced border protection is also necessary to effectively fight criminal groups smuggling illegal immigrants, which exploit the desperate situation of immigrants and endanger their lives.

### *Legal Immigration*

The EU and its Member States and EEA states are faced with an aging population and will need qualified immigration to safeguard their economies, social welfare systems and the economic well-being of their citizens. Yet in public debates immigration is all too often seen as a threat rather than an opportunity.

While immigration policies and quotas are competences of Member States and EEA states, the EU should foster and promote channels of legal immigration corresponding to the needs of different economic sectors and job markets and the demographic challenges of Member States and EEA states. Therefore some thought should be given to extending the Blue-Card system to non-academic fields. In addition, third country nationals legally working in the EU should also be treated as equals of EU-citizens with regards to pay, working conditions and social rights.