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The refugee crisis and the EU - A Green response

Contribution by 8 Green MEPs

INTRODUCTION

Greens have long argued for an effective Common European Asylum System (CEAS) which would respond to the needs of those seeking sanctuary. This should ensure that wherever they may claim asylum in the EU, their application will be dealt with fairly and should have a similar outcome; that they will be supported during the period of their claim and that this will continue when they receive international protection. We have argued for a clear system of solidarity, so that if a Member State comes under particular pressure and feels they are not able to support or deal fairly with asylum seekers, other EU countries would step in to help.

We have only to look across the EU at the moment to see that we do not yet have such a system and that some Governments are actively resisting any idea of sharing responsibility, or only on their own, prejudiced, terms. Greens are convinced the EU can and must do more – especially when we look at the support offered to refugees in poorer countries such as Lebanon and Jordan.

This booklet of short essays by some Green MEPs aims to provide ‘snapshots’ of the situation in a number of different countries (Austria, Hungary and France) as well as in neighbouring Balkan states – which, disturbingly, some wish to describe as ‘safe’ countries. In looking at the CEAS itself, we put forward proposals as to how people could reach the EU, without risking death at sea, or having to pay the smuggling gangs. We look at the problems with the current ‘Dublin’ system, which determines which country usually takes responsibility for dealing with an asylum claim, and the Green proposals for its radical reform. Finally, we consider how we welcome those with humanitarian protection status into our societies, by considering what we can do in terms of meaningful integration.

Syria is not the only crisis. Greens are clear that we must not forget the rights of those from other countries who need to seek asylum in the EU.

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