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EFA Group Statement on EU-Turkey agreement & the refugee crisis

The European Free Alliance (EFA) Group in the European Parliament is critical of the agreement reached between the EU and Turkey at the recent meeting of EU heads of state and government.

The agreement paves the way for returning refugees from the Greek islands to Turkey. However, the EFA Group questions the legality of the agreement and contests whether Turkey is a safe country for refugees. EFA has called for the agreement to be contested in the European Court of Justice.

MEPs debated the agreement at the European Parliament in Strasbourg with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and EU Council President Donald Tusk.



J-M Terricabras, President of the EFA Group

Speaking on behalf of the EFA Group in the debate, EFA President **Josep-Maria Terricabras MEP** said:

"The EFA Group is very much concerned about the deal with Turkey.

"First, the deal does nothing to solve the refugee crisis.

"Instead of providing a just and humane common European solution, member states egoistically try to hide the crisis from the view of EU citizens, pretending that illegal mass returns of refugees to Syria have nothing to do with the Union.

"But we know how terrible the human suffering at the Turkey – Syrian border is. The Union should have

proposed an ambitious and united approach in asylum matters, based on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities.

"Second, Turkey is not a safe country for refugees.

"It does not provide basic guarantees for the status of refugees. Moreover, Turkey is not a safe country even for its own nationals. Turkey is engulfed by violence and repression against Kurds and other minorities.

"The Turkish government should put an end to censorship and respect the freedom of expression.

"Last but not least, the deal is illegal. By framing it as a statement of the heads of state and governments, the EU side tries to avoid the obligations under EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

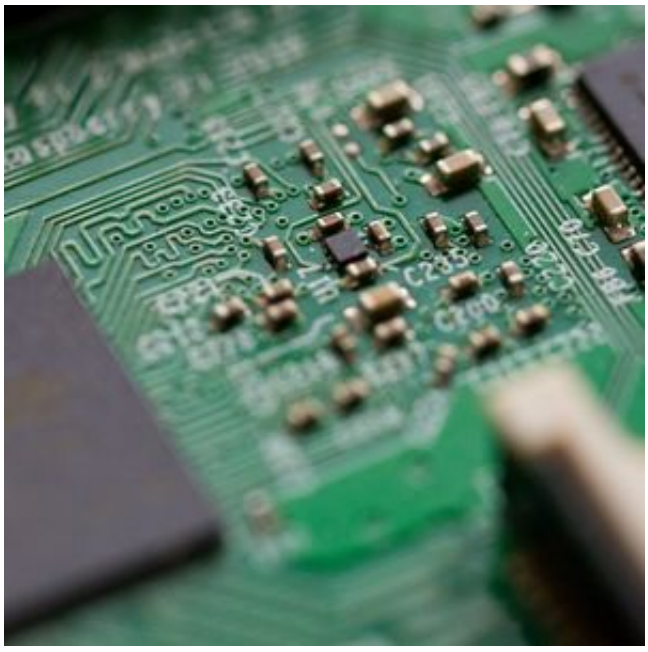
"It also circumvents the prerogatives of this parliament to co-decide on asylum and migration matters.

"We expect the parliament to take all necessary steps to evaluate the legality of this agreement together with the decisions based on it and contest it in the Court of Justice."

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Responsible MEPs



Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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