Press release | 02.09.2009

Asylum policy

Resettlement of refugees could be welcome addition to EU asylum system

Today, the European Commission published a proposal for a "Joint EU resettlement programme" for refugees from 'third' countries. UK Green MEP **Jean Lambert**, a Member of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee, commented:

"We welcome the EU Commission proposal in principle, but emphasise that any resettlement measures must be complementary to an effective EU asylum policy, not a substitute for it. Resettlement should also not be confused with measures which might be needed to help EU countries that feel unable to deliver effective protection to those seeking asylum in their territory.

A resettlement programme should offer a future for vulnerable asylum seekers, such as human rights defenders, victims of rape, or others who are facing specific problems, including within refugee camps. The UNHCR has a well-established programme of identifying such individuals and some countries - including some EU Member States, the USA and Canada - offer protection to them. If it works well, a resettlement programme will be a welcome addition to the asylum system.

We welcome the recognition that the EU could do more for those seeking protection from oppression. We hope that national governments will not only agree to develop an effective resettlement programme across the EU, but also to improve their existing national asylum systems."

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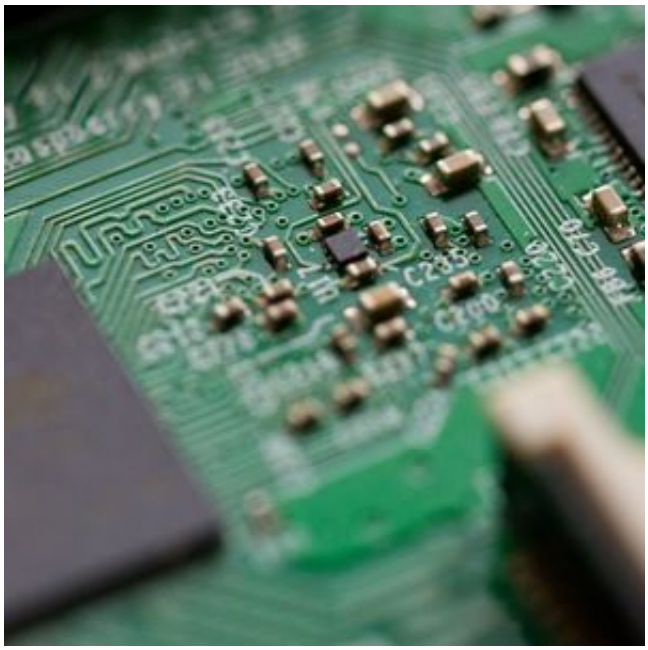


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