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[Press release](#) | 18.04.2011

EU migration crisis

Commission must move to resolve standoff on Tunisian migrants

Commenting on the news that trains containing Tunisians in possession of humanitarian residence permits were blocked at the borders of at least two EU member states (France and Austria), Greens/EFA co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** said:

"Tunisian people, who for years suffered as a result of the EU's flawed foreign policy and its kowtowing to the Ben Ali dictatorship, are now suffering as a result of EU's dysfunctional internal affairs. Blocking the entry of trains from Italy transporting Tunisians in possession of humanitarian residence permits is just the latest chapter in this distasteful standoff. The free movement of people is a sacrosanct principle of the Schengen agreement and closing borders is in clear breach of the spirit of Schengen at the very least.

"The Commission is complicit in this with its inactivity leading to the breakdown of the Schengen system. We call on the Commission to urgently invoke the EU Temporary Protection Directive (1) or present a concrete alternative proposal to address the situation with regards to the large influx of people seeking refuge from the current instability in the Mediterranean region."

(1) Temporary protection is a procedure of an exceptional character during an emergency situation that involves a mass influx of displaced persons. Directive 2001/55/EC aims to harmonise temporary protection for displaced persons in cases of mass influx on the basis of solidarity between Member States (chapter VI of the Directive). The directive envisages a number of obligations towards beneficiaries of temporary protection, including residence permit for the entire duration of the stay (Article 8) that is granted for at least one year with the possibility of extension, access to employment (Article 12), access to suitable accommodation (Article 13), access to education for minors (Article 14) as well as the possibility of family reunification (Article 15).

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