Press release | 23.04.2015

EU migration summit

Europe's shame continues as leaders focus on deterrence instead of sea rescue

Commenting ahead of today's summit of EU heads of state and government, which will discuss last week's tragedies involving refugees in the Mediterranean and the EU response, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** and **Philippe Lamberts** said:

"EU leaders are yet again set to meet and express their horror at the tragic losses of life in the Mediterranean after the unprecedented events of the past week. Nobody should be convinced by this hypocrisy. The draft conclusions of the summit show that despite their feigned concern, EU leaders will proceed with business as usual and fail to take the necessary steps to prevent the recurrent losses of life in the Mediterranean. Europe's shameful stance continues.

"The summit's conclusions reveal that, as before, the focus will remain on deterrence. They want to destroy boats, tackle smugglers and reinforce borders in North Africa. That will not solve the ongoing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and will leave us waiting for the inevitable next tragedy.

"We need a permanent EU-funded programme for search and rescue of refugees. Giving more funds to the TRITON mission of the EU's FRONTEX border agency is not sufficient. FRONTEX's mandate is explicitly that of border protection: it has no mandate to engage in proactive search and rescue at sea. More money and more resources might save some lives by accident but will not change FRONTEX's mandate. What we need is a designated programme for sea search and rescue, with EU funding.

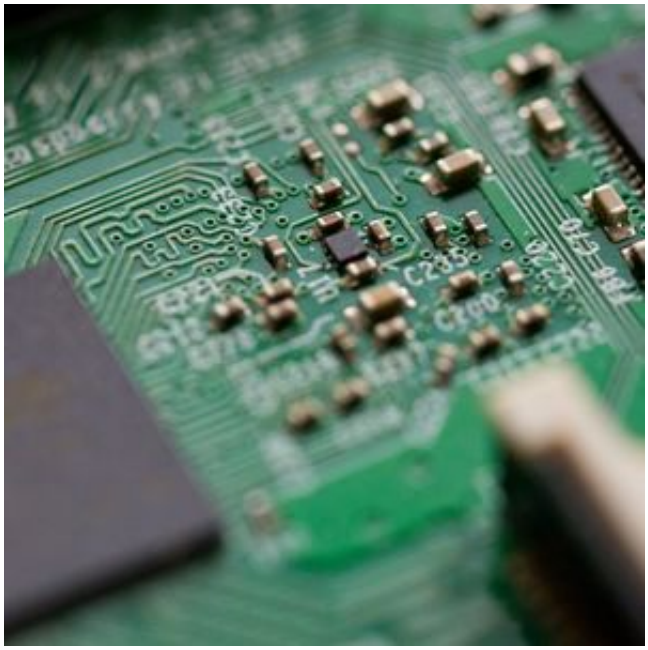
"The political groups in the European Parliament yesterday called for more resources for sea search and rescue and a more coherent EU migration policy but it seems their member parties in national governments are ignoring them. With the Commission also sitting on its hands, the Parliament must act. We call on the other political groups to support proposals to amend the EU budget for 2015 to provide a clear and dedicated budget line for a permanent sea search and rescue programme.

"EU countries also need to do much more in terms of humanitarian response and receiving refugees. The proposal to accept 5,000 refugees in a new 'resettlement programme' is a drop in the ocean."

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