en | fr

Press release | 19.03.2016

EU summit

Legally dubious agreement with Turkey

Speaking after the EU heads of state and government agreed deal that will see thousands of refugees in Greece forced to return to Turkey with little or no chance to apply for asylum, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** said:

"This agreement falls far short of what needs to be done to find a long-lasting solution to the refugee crisis. By forcing most asylum seekers to return to Turkey and limiting the few opportunities for resettlement to Syrians who have not previously tried to enter Europe irregularly, the EU heads of state and government have shown their complete disdain for the basic principles of EU and international law. Expecting the agreement to become operational in a matter of days, when the massive human and financial resources needed to make it work simply do not exist, is also pure fantasy.

"The agreement is quite simply incompatible with the guarantee to the right to seek asylum, prohibiting collective expulsions and ensuring that the needs of each individual refugee are properly assessed. It is clear that Turkey cannot be considered a safe third country, given the all-too-frequent evidence of the appalling treatment of non-European asylum seekers there, and the EU is once again turning a blind eye to the appalling human rights record of the authoritarian regime in Ankara in the name of political expediency. Turning the Greek hotspots into effective detention centres designed to hold asylum seekers while their forced return to Turkey is organised flies in the face of every international agreement on asylum seekers' and migrants' fundamental rights.

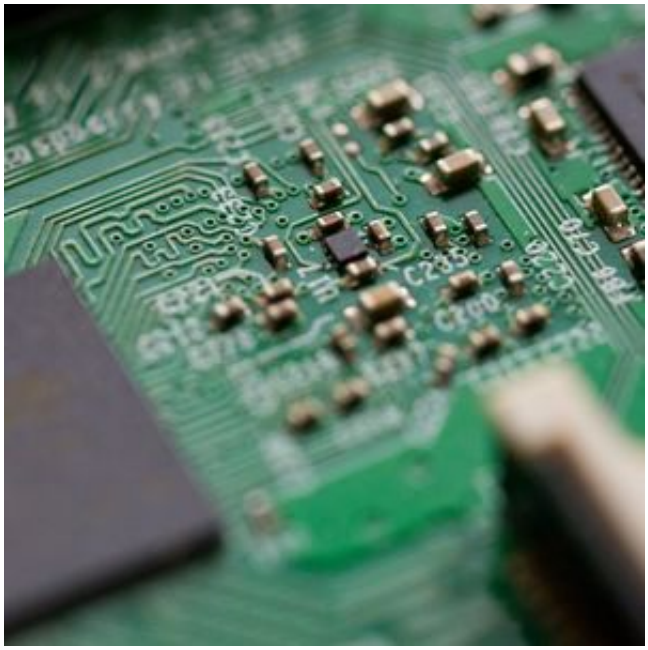
"The EU risks becoming morally bankrupt by agreeing to resettle just 72,000 people on a voluntary basis – around 3% of the total number of refugees in Turkey and a drop in the ocean compared to the more than 500m Europeans. If properly distributed, resettling 500,000 refugees per year for the next six years would be easily manageable for the EU – but our leaders have opted instead for a quick-fix solution that solves nobody's problems but their own."

- **Briefing on the EU-Turkey deal**

Recommended

Press release

chris-ried



Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design

11.11.2026

Press release



[Ukrainian children in Russia: Parliament to call for u…]

11.11.2026

Press release

Redek Kozak



Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…

11.11.2026

Press release

Tim Hurst (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Methane Regulation: European Parliament capitulates to…

22.10.2026

Responsible MEPs



Philippe Lamberts

Member

Please share

- E-Mail