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Migration: Expansion of safe third countries concept throws human rights to the wind

Today, MEPs have just voted to support a proposed revision to the Asylum Procedures Regulation (APR), which would expand the scope of the 'safe third countries concept'. The APR was adopted as part of the Migration & Asylum Pact in June 2024 and is due to enter into force by June 2026. The Greens/EFA Group rejected today's proposal and the APR, in part due to significant concerns about so-called "safe country concepts", which the current proposals seek to expand even further.

Erik Marquardt MEP, Greens/EFA Group shadow rapporteur on the file, comments:

"The EPP is teaming up with far-right groups to weaken the EU's Migration & Asylum Pact before it even enters into force by expanding the 'safe country' rules. Not content with the harsh rules they heralded only last year, the EPP and the far-right are pushing even more draconian rules, before the reform is even being implemented.

"Today's vote will further strip people of their rights and make it harder to seek protection in the EU. This will shift an unfair burden of proof to applicants as they will be forced to prove why the country is not safe in their specific case, which is an almost impossible burden given the tight deadlines and difficulty accessing legal and linguistic assistance.

"Our group firmly opposes restricting asylum rights. The EU must stand up for international human rights law. These new rules are designed to bypass court rulings and enable controversial outsourcing deals like the Ruanda-model, which throw even basic understandings of human rights and human dignity to the wind.

"We stand firmly on the side of all people in need of protection, defend the right to seek asylum in the EU, and are opposed to the reckless and short-sighted outsourcing of Member States' responsibilities to third countries where human rights compliance cannot be guaranteed."

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