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[Press release](#) | 09.12.2013

Rescuing refugees at sea

FRONTEX treatment of refugees at sea to be retasked following EP vote

The European Parliament's civil liberties committee this evening voted on new EU legislation governing sea missions by FRONTEX, the EU's border management agency. The Greens welcomed the vote, which sets out the EP's position for negotiations with EU governments on the new rules (1), with Green migration policy spokesperson **Ska Keller** stating:

"Today's vote would represent an important breakthrough in how the EU deals with refugee boats in the Mediterranean if MEPs can convince EU governments to follow suit. MEPs have today voted to change how the FRONTEX border management agency treats refugee boats encountered by its missions at sea, bringing FRONTEX in line with international law. Instead of the current abhorrent practise, by which FRONTEX simply turns back boats regardless, MEPs supported a Green proposal to ensure FRONTEX will have to properly assess whether refugees on intercepted boats need protection in the EU."

"MEPs also delivered a clear message to EU governments on the requirement to save lives at sea: all FRONTEX missions must be governed by binding and universally-applicable rules on the rescue of migrants in difficulty at sea. National authorities will not be allowed to refuse sea rescues because their governments do not want to accept any more refugees. A year on from its Nobel Prize award, the EU needs to do more to earn the prize, notably on its approach to refugees."

(1) EU governments are expected to adopt a common position later this week, with legislative negotiations foreseen to start before Christmas.

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Ska Keller

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