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Welcoming migrants will help Europe lead in the world

Press release from EFA MEP Ernest Maragall (Catalonia)

Responding to today's debate on migration in the European Parliament, Catalan MEP **Ernest Maragall** said that welcoming migrants could help Europe lead in the world.



MEP Ernest Maragall

The MEP pointed out that nations such as the USA, Canada and Australia, which have welcomed migrants are leaders in the world. Mr Maragall warned that failing to respond positively to the current situation would be a step towards Europe's decline.

MEPs meeting in Strasbourg were debating current challenges with migration, particularly the Western Balkans route. The debate was held with the participation of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and European Council President Donald Tusk. This follows a summit of EU leaders to discuss the situation on 25 October, and comes ahead of a special summit to be held in Valletta on 11-12 November.

Ernest Maragall commented:

"Whilst Europe remains locked in inward-looking debate, many thousands of refugees are knocking at its doors. There are in fact far fewer refugees arriving than there are tourists visiting Europe, and they account for less than one per cent of the population. Nevertheless, Europe is giving in to fear and closing its doors.

"The arrival of so many refugees has forced a European response and Europe has reacted in the worst way possible, with borders and refugee camps. And so we now see again images we thought we'd left behind for ever.

"This isn't only a question of justice. It's a step towards Europe's decline. It is no coincidence that those nations who have welcomed migrants, such as the USA, Canada and Australia, are those that lead the world. At the same time, those nations that experience mass out-migration also experience decline.

"We can and should understand the worries and concerns of smaller European nations struggling to cope with current challenges. What we can never accept is that the European Union should simply give up and turn its back on those in need."

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Ernest Maragall

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