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Foreign and European Affairs

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H.E. Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission

The Standing Foreign and European Affairs Committee, meeting on 2 March 2021, discussed the amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of biometric data for the effective application of Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Regulation on Asylum and Migration Management] and of Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX [Resettlement Regulation], for identifying an illegally staying third-country national or stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes and amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/818 – COM (2020) 614.

The Standing Foreign and European Affairs Committee welcomes the initiative taken by the European Commission to propose a new Pact on Migration and Asylum. Migration and mobility can be manageable under a comprehensive, rights-based, grounded in partnerships and cooperation because a credible migration policy can only be achieved if it also respects international conventions on human rights. The Committee notes that the 2015 migration crisis revealed several shortcomings in the framework used by the EU to manage migration and asylum. Some Member States face the challenge of external border management, coping with large-scale arrivals by land or sea and overpopulated reception centres. The need for a revision of such a framework was evident during recent crisis situations. It is evident that the EU needs to manage the different Member States' migration policies and facilitate a new and durable European framework, providing a comprehensive approach, bringing together policy in the areas of migration, asylum, integration and border management.

The Committee, acting in its scrutiny function, recognises that no Member States should shoulder a disproportionate responsibility and that all Member States should contribute to solidarity on a constant basis. The effectiveness of the New Pact depends on progress on all fronts to create faster, seamless migration processes and stronger governance of migration and border policies, supported by modern IT systems and more effective agencies. By reducing

unsafe and irregular routes and promoting sustainable and safe legal pathways for those in need of protection, the New Pact can reinforce the reality that most migrants come to the EU through legal channels to match the EU labour market needs.

The Foreign and European Affairs Committee, after taking into consideration the proposal on the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of biometric data, notes that:

1. The proposed amendments will have a positive impact, reaffirming the need for the interoperability of the systems of Member States, and the creation of a separate category for Search and Rescue arrivals. The Maltese authorities already collect and transmit the biometric data of third-country nationals or stateless persons disembarked following Search and Rescue.
2. In view of the obligations in the amended proposal, some Member States will have to cater for additional financial implications in order to meet these obligations.

In this respect, the EU should guarantee additional funding to Member States to ensure their ability to meet all the obligations in the proposal adequately.

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