

European Border and Coast Guard: Parliament and Council strike provisional deal

[22-06-2016 - 12:14]

The creation of an EU border control system received a first green light from Parliament and Council negotiators on Tuesday night. The cornerstone of the deal is to upgrade today's Frontex border agency, which, together with national border management authorities, will form a European Border and Coast Guard. It is now up to member states and Parliament as a whole to endorse the agreement.

If approved, the regulation would enable extra border guard teams (European Border and Coast Guard or EBCG) to be rapidly deployed to EU countries whose external borders are under pressure. National authorities would still manage their borders day to day, but could seek help from the new agency in a crisis.

"We reached this compromise with the Dutch Presidency at breath-taking speed. With this regulation we have made the European Border and Coast Guard Agency more effective, more efficient and more accountable. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so we introduced the concept that the security of EU external borders is a responsibility shared among all EU member states", said Parliament's lead negotiator on the regulation Artis Pabriks (EPP, LV).

"We have set up an Agency with greater powers and responsibilities which will be able to provide assistance to any member state that is faced with disproportionate migratory pressure or any other challenges at its external borders. There will be an obligatory pool of 1,500 border guards and a pool of technical equipment available for the Agency to deploy at any time. And if a member state refuses to cooperate with the Agency to an extent that jeopardises the functioning of Schengen zone, there will be a possibility for the rest of the Member States to reintroduce temporary border controls through the Art 29 of Schengen Border Code, which is slightly amended through this Regulation."

"The European Border and Coast Guard Regulation will ensure that the EU external borders are safer and better managed. This is not a silver bullet that can solve the migration crisis that the EU is facing today or fully restore trust in the Schengen area, but it is very much needed first step", he added.

Main points of the deal

- **Returns:** the agency will have a greater role in returning migrants to their country of origin, but only when it comes to executing decisions which have already been taken by national authorities; return provisions have been further strengthened by additional fundamental rights safeguards while the Agency will not be involved in returns between non-EU countries.
- If a member state opposes a Council decision to provide assistance, the other EU countries may temporarily reintroduce internal border checks.
- **Technical Equipment Pool:** Parliament's negotiators ensured that the teams of border guards in the Rapid Reaction Pool will have the equipment they need by introducing the rapid reaction equipment pool that must be available no later than 10 days after the operational plan is agreed.

Press release

- **Liaison Officers:** it was agreed that *Liaison officers* will monitor all EU member states with external borders. Each Liaison Officer may cover up to four geographically close countries, to ensure greater cooperation between the Agency and the member state concerned.
- **Accountability and information:** the European Parliament will be kept informed through regular reporting and access to information for MEPs. Also Parliament's role has been strengthened in the procedure for selecting the Agency's Executive Director.

Next steps

The informal agreement will be put to a confirmation vote in the Civil Liberties Committee on Monday 27 June. If the deal is approved in the committee it will be put to a vote by Parliament as a whole during the July Strasbourg plenary session.

Further information

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>

Contact

Maja OREL SCHWARZ

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32357

PORT: (+32) 473 86 49 74

EMAIL: libe-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_Justice