

## Schulz: “We cannot and should not outsource our problems to Turkey”

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Talks with Turkey on dealing with the refugee crisis should not be linked to the country’s efforts to join the EU, warned Martin Schulz. The EP President addressed European heads of state and government at the start of the EU summit on 17-18 March dedicated to the migration crisis and economic priorities. “Turkey won’t get any discounts on media freedom and minority protection, the separation of powers or the rule of law,” he said, calling them “non-negotiable issues”.

Schulz said the EU and Turkey are key partners: “We need a partnership, not a dependence on Turkey. We cannot and should not ‘outsource’ our problems to Turkey.”

The Parliament is also keen to find out the details on returns to Turkey and resettlement to the EU, he said. MEPs want to know how Turkey would meet conditions for being considered a “safe third country” and what guarantees there were that returning refugees would not be handed over to the people persecuting them.

The EP President also underlined that any arrangement reached with Turkey could not replace a genuine EU migration and asylum policy. He called for an overhaul of existing rules and the establishment of a European Coast and Border Guard, as proposed by the European Commission.

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Schulz urged member states to accelerate the relocation of refugees from Greece to their countries to help the thousands of people living in dire conditions near the border with FYROM.

In addition Schulz said more support should be given to Jordan and Lebanon that together host 2.9 million refugees: “What a display of generosity and human decency! Yet, both countries have reached their limits.”

The President said that although the migration crisis was getting more pressing by the day, the economy remained important too. “Boosting jobs and growth must be a priority for us,” he said, pointing out that the European economy was only slowly recovering and that unemployment still remained high.

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- Speech: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press\\_release\\_speeches/speeches-2016/speeches-2016-march/html/speech-at-the-european-council](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press_release_speeches/speeches-2016/speeches-2016-march/html/speech-at-the-european-council)
- Summit agenda: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2016/03/17-18/>
- EP President’s website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/>
- Migration top story: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/top-stories/20150831TST91035/Migration-a-common-challenge>
- Syria top story: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/top-stories/20130905TST18719/Syria>