



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Towards the creation of a European Humanitarian Visa Scheme

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2018, 16:00-18:00
ROOM ASP 5E1

Background note

While the International protection *acquis* is mainly accessible only to those who manage to reach the physical borders of the European Union, the safe and legal ways to reach EU are limited. In the absence of alternative accessible legal pathways and confronted with ever stricter border controls at the external borders of the EU, people in need of international protection are forced to resort to irregular and perilous migration channels. This limitation has become even more evident in the context of the recent refugee situation in Europe where increasing number of people lost their lives on their way to the EU.

Although there is currently no EU scheme for humanitarian visas *per se*, visas can be issued on humanitarian grounds at the discretion of the Member States under the existing EU Visa Code Regulation. However, this tool is underused despite the large numbers of people in need of protection.

The commitment to strengthen the legal pathways for third country nationals in need of protection has been stressed both by the European Commission on several occasions as well as by the European Parliament but the political will of the member states in the EU to actually support such initiatives is yet lacking.

In this context, The European Parliament believes a flexible and coherent European humanitarian visa scheme would be an essential EU policy option that would allow persons to travel in a legal and safe manner to the territory of the EU for the purpose of making an application for international protection. As a result, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament is drafting a legislative own-initiative report on humanitarian visa. The conference will be feeding into the current work of the committee by provide a key opportunity for stakeholders to exchange views on the matter, good practices at national level and policy options for the EU legislator.



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Programme

16:00 - 16:10 **Registration and coffee**

16:10 - 16:15 **Welcome and Introduction**

Bodil Valero MEP, Greens/EFA shadow for LIBE own-initiative report on Humanitarian Visa

PANEL I: TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A EUROPEAN HUMANITARIAN VISA SCHEME

Chair: Bodil Valero MEP

16:15 -16:25 **The work of the European Parliament towards the creation of a European Humanitarian Visa Scheme**

Juan Fernando López Aguilar MEP, S&D (tbc)

16:25-16:35 **Humanitarian Visa: which policy options are available to the legislator?**

Laura Corrado, European Commission (tbc)

16:35-16:45 *Dr. Violeta Moreno-Lax, Queen Mary University of London (tbc)*

16:45-17:00 *Open discussion and interventions by participants*

PANEL II: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND PROMOTING REFORM

Chair: Bodil Valero MEP

17:00 -17:20 **What are the options currently in place under national law? The example of Sweden and Italy**

Maria Ferm, Member of the Swedish Parliament and the Swedish Green Party

Prof. Dr. Jan J. J. De Volder, Comunità di Sant'Egidio (tbc)

17:20-17:40 **The role of civil society organisations and good practices**

Anais Faure-Atger, Red Cross EU Office (tbc)

Torsten Moritz, CCME (tbc)

17:40 -17:55 *Open discussion and interventions by participants*

17:55-18:00 *Closing remarks*

Bodil Valero MEP, Greens/EFA