7. Notes that any agreement should duly take into account SMEs and improve their ability to invest abroad;

8. Recalls also that the EU and Taiwan already have a well integrated economic relationship, generally low customs duties on both sides and a well structured dialogue, involving regular meetings to solve bilateral trade and investment issues;

9. Stresses that the agreement should include a strong commitment by the parties to sustainable and inclusive development in economic, social and environmental terms, with regard to investment;

10. Stresses that investment agreements concluded by the EU must respect the capacity for public intervention, in particular when pursuing public policy objectives such as social and environmental standards, human rights, security, workers' and consumers' rights, public health and safety and cultural diversity; calls for specific clauses on these objectives to be included in the agreement;

11. Recommends that, with regard to market access, both parties be allowed to exclude certain sectors from their liberalisation commitments in order to protect strategic national interests;

12. Reiterates its call for an effective corporate social responsibility clause and effective social and environmental clauses;

13. Stresses that the agreement must oblige foreign investors in the EU to abide by European social standards and social dialogue requirements;

14. Calls on the Commission to start talks for such agreements between the EU and Taiwan;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Taiwanese Government and Legislative Yuan.

P7_TA(2013)0414

EU and Member State measures to tackle the flow of refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2013 on EU and Member State measures to tackle the flow of refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria (2013/2837(RSP))

(2016/C 181/10)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular those of 16 February 2012 ([1]), 13 September 2012 ([2]), 23 May 2013 ([3]) and 12 September 2013 ([4]), and on refugees fleeing armed conflict,

— having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria of 23 January, 18 February, 11 March, 22 April, 27 May, 24 June, 9 July and 22 July 2013; having regard to the European Council conclusions on Syria of 8 February 2013,

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([1]) OJ C 249 E, 30.8.2013, p. 37.
([2]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0351.
([3]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0223.
([4]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0378.

— having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, of 21 August 2013 on the latest reports of use of chemical weapons in Damascus, of 23 August 2013 on the high urgency of a political solution to the Syrian conflict (reflecting the agreed position of the EU on Syria of 7 September 2013), of 10 September 2013 on the proposal to place Syria's chemical weapons under international control, and of 14 September 2013 following the US-Russian agreement on chemical weapons in Syria, as well as to the statements made by the VP/HR during Parliament's plenary debate in Strasbourg on 11 September 2013,

— having regard to the statements made by the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, on Syrian refugees and the EU's response, in particular her statement of 3 September 2013 on the latest figure regarding refugees fleeing from the Syrian crisis, and to the ECHO (Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection) situation reports and factsheets on Syria,

— having regard to the remarks made by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, at the Informal Meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Vilnius, on 18 July 2013 ([1]),

— having regard to the Security Council briefings on Syria issued by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, in particular that of 18 April 2013,

— having regard to the joint statement of the Ministerial Meeting of Syria Bordering Countries organised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on 4 September 2013,

— having regard to the UN Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria,

— having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,

— having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

— having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to all of which Syria is a party,

— having regard to Articles 78, 79 and 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

— having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,

— having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas up to 20 September 2013 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered a total of 1 929 227 Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and in North Africa; whereas the total number of refugees, including those unregistered, is estimated at 2 102 582; whereas according to the same sources 76 % of the Syrian refugee population are women and children; whereas 410 000 Syrian refugee children are of primary school age (between 5 and 11); whereas according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as at 9 September 2013 was 4,25 million;

([1]) http://www.unhcr.org/51b7149c9.html

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B. whereas according to the UNHCR the number of refugees (including those awaiting registration) present in receiving countries as at 20 September 2013 was as follows: Turkey, 492 687; Lebanon, 748 608; Jordan, 531 768; Iraq, 190 857; Egypt, 124 373; Morocco, Algeria and Libya, 14 289 (registered); whereas thousands of Syrians are fleeing on a daily basis to neighbouring countries and the UN Syria Regional Response Plan is projecting a total of 3,5 million refugees from Syria by the end of 2013;

C. whereas asylum claims in the EU from Syrians have continued to increase in 2013, with a total of 52 037 asylum claims having been made since the beginning of the conflict in 2011 in the EU and its closest neighbours (Switzerland and Norway);

D. whereas, within the EU-28, Germany (14 842) and Sweden (14 083) have received 59 % of the claims lodged; whereas, while other countries have experienced significant increases in applications, only one other Member State has received more than 2 000 claims (the UK, with 2 634);

E. whereas there is a lack of fully accurate and reliable data about the total number of Syrians coming to Europe, and of information on the numbers seeking asylum in European countries and the number present overall; whereas, according to the UNHCR, despite these gaps, and the fact that statistics and data on adjudication practices in respect of asylum claims in EU Member States have flaws, there are indications that gaps in the protection of Syrians within the EU persist;

F. whereas the Syrian refugee crisis constitutes a first test for the newly revised Common European Asylum System (CEAS);

G. whereas EU legislation already provides some tools, such as the Visa Code ([1]) and the Schengen Borders Code ([2]), making it possible to grant humanitarian visas;

H. whereas the Member States should be encouraged to make use of the funds that will be available under the Asylum and Migration Fund and of the funds available under the Preparatory Action 'Enable the resettlement of refugees during emergency situations', which covers, among other things, the following measures: supporting persons already recognised as refugees by the UNHCR; supporting emergency action in the case of groups of refugees, identified as priorities, who are under armed attack and who face conjunctures of extreme vulnerability and of a life-threatening nature; providing, where needed, extra financial support during emergencies to the UNHCR and to its liaison organisations in the Member States and at EU level;

I. whereas the latest tragedy off Lampedusa, on 3 October 2013, left 130 migrants dead, with hundreds of others missing; whereas tens of thousands of migrants have died trying to reach the EU; pointing once more to the need to do everything possible to save the lives of people in danger and to the need for Member States to abide by their international sea-rescue obligations;

1. Is deeply concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and the heavy strain it is putting on neighbouring countries; expresses concern that the exodus of refugees continues to accelerate with no sign of the outflow ending soon;

2. Praises the efforts and solidarity of the authorities of those countries and the generosity of their populations in assisting refugees from Syria;

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, p. 1).

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1).

3. Welcomes the open-door policy of Syria's neighbouring countries and urges them to keep their borders open to all refugees fleeing Syria;

4. Expresses concern that a growing number of Syrians are risking their lives by embarking on dangerous boat crossings across the Mediterranean to the EU;

5. Welcomes the fact that the EU and its Member States have committed more than EUR 1 billion in humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance to Syrians inside and outside Syria; notes that the EU is the largest humanitarian donor to the Syrian crisis; calls also on the EU to monitor the distribution of that funding;

6. Calls for the EU to continue its generous funding of humanitarian and non-humanitarian efforts in response to the needs of people in Syria and refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries;

7. Encourages the Member States to address acute needs through resettlement in addition to existing national quotas and through humanitarian admission; encourages the Member States to make use of the funds still available under the preparatory action/pilot project on resettlement;

8. Calls for the international community, the EU and the Member States to continue providing support in response to this exceptional humanitarian crisis and to commit themselves to providing effective assistance to Syria's neighbouring countries;

9. Calls for the EU to convene a humanitarian conference on the Syrian refugee crisis, with priority being given to actions directed at host countries in the region (in particular Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq) in order to support them in their effort to host ever-growing refugee populations and maintain an open-door policy; stresses that such a conference should involve all EU institutions and civil society organisations and focus on humanitarian efforts and on strengthening the EU's role and involvement in the diplomatic efforts to help end the conflict in Syria;

10. Stresses the importance at this stage of exploring concretely whether, how and when Member States could do more to reinforce their protection response to Syria; points to the need for solidarity and for proactive strengthening of the overall protection response in the EU through enhanced cooperation, information sharing, capacity building and policy dialogue;

11. Welcomes the general consensus existing among Member States that Syrian nationals should not be returned to Syria; stresses, however, that a more coherent approach and greater solidarity with Member States facing particular pressure are needed in the reception of refugees from Syria; calls on the Member States to make sure that all the provisions of the different instruments of the CEAS are correctly implemented;

12. Calls on the Member States to explore all existing EU laws and procedures for providing safe entry into the EU in order to temporarily admit Syrians fleeing their country; notes that legal entry into the EU is preferable to more dangerous irregular entry, which could entail human trafficking risks; notes that some of the Member States have granted Syrians either permanent residency (e.g. Sweden) or temporary admission (e.g. Germany);

13. Reminds the Member States that Syrians fleeing the conflict who are seeking international protection should be referred to competent national asylum authorities and have access to fair and efficient asylum procedures;

14. Calls for the EU to take appropriate, responsible measures regarding a possible influx of refugees into its Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue monitoring the current situation and to work on contingency planning, including the possibility of applying the Temporary Protection Directive ([1]), if and when conditions demand it;

15. Points out that the Member States are required to come to the assistance of migrants at sea, and calls on Member States which have failed to abide by their international obligations to stop turning back boats with migrants on board;

16. Calls on the Member States to respect the principle of non-refoulement, in compliance with existing international and EU law; calls on the Member States to put an immediate end to any improper and extended detention practices in violation of international and European law, and points out that measures to detain migrants must always be subject to an administrative decision, and must be duly substantiated and temporary;

17. Calls on its relevant committees to continue monitoring the situation in Syria and neighbouring countries and the measures taken by the Member States in this respect;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Parliament and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the parliaments and governments of those countries neighbouring Syria and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.

([1]) Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).