



**Meeting of the Bureau
of the Union of Socialist Local and Regional Representatives in Europe (USLRRE)
on 8 December 2015, in Brussels**

Resolution of the USLRRE

Solidarity in receiving refugees in the EU!

Since the summer of 2015, an unprecedented number of refugees are flowing into the European Union. These are mostly people who have fled from civil war and violence and who are coming to the EU looking for protection and a perspective. It's an act of humanity and solidarity to help these people in need.

In the opinion of the socialist local and regional Representatives in Europe, we will only successfully master this situation, if we show solidarity:

- **Solidarity with refugees in need of protection,**
- **Solidarity with the countries particularly affected by the influx of refugees, and**
- **Solidarity with the municipalities and regions that in many EU countries carry the main burden of providing for the refugees and their future integration.**

Solidarity with the refugees

The imperative to show solidarity with refugees in need of protection is an unquestioned central value of our common Europe. Given the experience of 20th century history, particularly we, Europeans, are aware of how important it is to practice solidarity with people who have become victims of war, violence and displacement. The guarantee to the right of asylum according to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees is underscored in article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and in the Treaty of Lisbon.

Solidarity in the European Union

The large influx of refugees presents many EU member states with great challenges. Greece, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Germany and Sweden are among the countries particularly affected. The USLRRE believes that solidarity in the European Union is not only required in the financial crisis and should not be limited solely to European cohesion policy aimed at decreasing the social and economic disparities between the regions in Europe. Solidarity is also needed at this time, when fairly sharing the burden of receiving refugees in need of protection in Europe and thus ensuring that they are provided for and accommodated humanely. This requires a common European effort to which every single member of the European Union has to make, as far as possible, a substantial contribution.

This is also explicitly provided for in Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (*TFEU*). This states that, as to the policies of the Union on asylum, immigration and border checks “and their implementation (...) the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the Member States” applies. The USLRRE thus also supports the plan proposed by EU Commission President Juncker to distribute the refugees among all member states according to a fair distribution key. In the context of the current situation, we urgently need a new European asylum policy.

Solidarity with municipalities and regions

In practice, it is mainly the municipalities and regions that provide services and accommodation to refugees at a local level. Many refugees will stay for a long time in the EU, some even for ever. Municipalities will play an important role in integrating these people. It is therefore of utmost importance that the European Union and the national states don't leave the municipalities to face these challenges alone. There, too, we have to practice solidarity! The EU and national states must fund and support municipalities, as well as provide the necessary framework conditions to ensure that municipalities are in a position to master their important task of looking after and integrating the refugees.

We have to act together quickly!

We, Europeans, have already mastered many challenges and crises together. Among these, in more recent times, are the growing together of Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain, as well as the financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis in various EU member states. We will also manage this emergency, provided we act decisively and in solidarity. If we don't, it may lastingly threaten our cohesion in the European Union.