



17 December 2009

## **MEP increases 2010 EU budget allocation for immigration**

The European Parliament adopted amendments by MEP Simon Busuttil increasing the budget allocation for 2010 for the immigration area and widening the scope for which the money may be used.

The **first amendment** concerns the **European Return Fund** which aims to provide support for Member States in improving the management of return of immigrants in all its dimensions through integrated management. Dr Busuttil's amendment brought an increase of €5 million in commitments and €5 million in payments leading to a total allocation of €87.5 million in commitments and €53 million in payments.

The amendment will also enable the Return Fund to be used for the organisation of information campaigns in countries of origin and transit in relation to the conditions and the prerequisites for the reception of refugees, displaced persons and asylum applicants, and also campaign on the consequences of refusal. The amendment also calls for priority to be given to voluntary returns as a means of return.

A **second amendment** concerns the **European Refugee Fund** which covers a variety of initiatives in the area of immigration. The amendment brings an increase of €10m in commitments to a total of €92.25m and €10 million in payments to a total of €65 million. The aim of the increase is to provide further financial support for the **pilot project for Malta** for the internal reallocation of beneficiaries of international protection. The amendment also calls for the money to be used for training for officials working in immigration on child protection issues.

A **third amendment** brought an increase of €5m in commitments to a total of €59.367m and €5 million in payments to a total of €38 million to the operational budget of the **Frontex agency**. The aim of this amendment is for Frontex to increase its assistance to Member States with their external border management, especially with what concerns the return of third-country nationals illegally present in the Member State. The amendment also lays down that returns should be carried out with dignity and in full respect of human rights.

*"I am delighted that once again the European Parliament and the EPP group have recognised the challenges that Malta is facing and put their money where their mouth is by supporting these amendments."* Dr Busuttil said.

The budget vote also saw through Dr Busuttil's amendment on **lesser-used languages**. The amendment enables funds to be made available for initiatives intended to safeguard, foster and strengthen lesser-used languages, such as languages of smaller Member States, so as to sustain and increase their vitality, especially in the literary, journalistic and broadcasting fields, which are the prime source of linguistic innovation as well as of conservation, thus putting into greater practice the European Union's philosophy of language diversity, multilingualism and subsidiarity.

The European Parliament voted to approve the 2010 budget today in plenary.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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