



26th April, 2007

MEP welcomes Border Intervention Teams

Addressing the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, MEP Simon Busuttil welcomed a new law which will establish **European Rapid Border Intervention Team** composed of border guards from EU countries and empowered them to help EU countries that are facing emergency situations with illegal immigration.

The Chamber voted in favour of the law on Thursday.

Dr Busuttil called the new law as a “solidarity instrument” pointing out that the law made it compulsory for EU Member States to help fellow EU countries which face difficulties on immigration.

“This solidarity is *compulsory*, it is *not optional*. This makes it *real* solidarity. Solidarity is not like charity, which is voluntary; it is a *binding commitment*.”

Dr Busuttil said that thanks to this law, countries facing emergency situations on immigration will now start to feel that they are no longer completely on their own.

However, he cautioned that on their own, the Rapid Intervention Teams would not be enough to overcome the challenge of illegal immigration.

He therefore called on EU Governments to do more to strengthen the Southern borders of the Union.

“*External border control is in the interest of all Member States and not just the countries that are facing difficulties. And once it is in everyone’s interest, it must also be everyone’s responsibility, a shared responsibility.*” he said.

Full text of speech below:

Intervention by Simon Busuttil MEP (EPP-ED, MT)

Deprez Report - 25 April 2007 – Rapid Border Intervention Teams

Thank you Mr President,

With this law we shall be establishing a **European intervention team of border guards** empowering them to help EU countries that are facing emergency situations with illegal immigration.

I warmly welcome this law because it is a **solidarity instrument**.

Coming from a Southern Member State, I welcome it even more because I appreciate that solidarity does not come easy and it does not come cheap.

This solidarity means that Member States are *now binding* themselves to assist other countries that face difficulty. This solidarity is *compulsory*, it is *not optional*. This makes it *real* solidarity. Solidarity is not like charity, which is voluntary; it is a *binding commitment*.

Thanks to this law, countries facing emergency situations on immigration will start to feel that they are no longer completely on their own.



So this law is a good step forward. ***But, on its own, it is not enough to overcome the challenge of illegal immigration.*** We must therefore avoid raising public expectations that this law will solve everything. It will not.

And we must also do more to strengthen the Southern borders of the Union. Last November, the Commission issued a Communication on strengthening the Southern maritime borders - and I call on the Commission to press on with the initiatives listed in this communication.

Let us not forget that external border control ***is in the interest of all Member States*** and not just the countries that are facing difficulties. And once it is in everyone's interest, it must also be ***everyone's responsibility, a shared responsibility.***

Thank you

.....

Office of Simon Busuttil MEP

Kevin Mizzi in Valletta: (356) 21228585