

[Press release – MEPs urge EU countries to speed up transfer of refugees from Italy and Greece](#)

MEPs will urge EU countries on Tuesday morning to accelerate the transfer of refugees from Italy and Greece to other member states, as agreed in September 2015.

Under two Council decisions adopted in September 2015, member states committed to relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers from these two “frontline” countries by September 2017, but only 18,418 persons have been moved (as of 11 May). Following the plenary debate with Council and Commission representatives, MEPs will vote on a resolution on Thursday.

You can watch the plenary debate at 9.00 on Tuesday via [EP Live](#), and [EbS+](#).

Background

Against the background of severe migration and refugee crises in the summer of 2015, the EU adopted two emergency decisions to relocate thousands of refugees. 160,000 asylum seekers with a high chance of being granted refugee status from Italy and Greece were to be relocated by September 2017 to other member states where their applications would be processed.

In a subsequent decision approved by the Council in September 2016 – which was opposed by Parliament – member states agreed that 54,000 out of the 160,000 places could be used for the admission of Syrian refugees from Turkey, as part of the EU-Turkey migration deal, rather than from Italy or Greece.

According to UNHCR data, around 50,000 asylum-seekers are still stuck in Greece, while Italy faced a new record in 2016 with 181.436 new arrivals.