

Migration in Europe: EU must act together and do more to support local authorities

The European Union needs to increase support for cities and regions and border countries that are on the front line of managing migration, the European Committee of the Regions said on 22 March. The EU's assembly for local and regional politicians expressed particular concern about the challenges faced by islands and coastal regions in the Mediterranean and called for greater shared European responsibility and investment.

The assembly called for local and regional authorities to be involved in every stage of framing and implementing the EU's migration-related policies, because of their role in taking care of new arrivals and then integrating them. In addition to asking for more funding, training and technical support for cities and regions, the European Committee of the Regions suggested that the EU should examine the possibility of "transferring responsibility for examining asylum applications from national to EU level".

The recommendations are contained in an opinion drafted by [Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos](#) (EL/EPP), a delegate from the Palaio Faliro municipality near Athens, and were adopted shortly after a debate with [Dimitris Avramopoulos](#), the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship.

[Karl-Heinz Lambertz](#), the President of the European Committee of Regions (CoR), said: "Local and regional governments are on the front line, receiving, managing and integrating migrants and refugees, and they need far more support. Every EU member state must shoulder the responsibility, to avoid leaving just a few countries and communities to manage alone. Migrants and refugees are not numbers; they are people that should be protected. It is a European challenge that needs European investment, which is why the next EU budget, after 2020, must increase and why EU regional funds – its cohesion policy, which supports social inclusion – must continue to be a strong pillar of Europe's future."

Speaking during the plenary debate, [Commissioner Avramopoulos](#) said there was a need for a " [radical re-think](#) " on the integration of migrants in Europe across all policy areas, as well as improved access to EU funds for cities and regions. "Local and regional authorities play a positive role in creating spaces for exchanges between migrants and societies, ensuring social inclusion and active participation in the host society. But you cannot and should not be doing this alone."

Mr [Kalogeropoulos](#) said: "Local and regional leaders generally feel that the EU has moved in the right direction over the past two years, but, in practice, there remain difficulties for local communities as well as for refugees and migrants. Social tensions are high, local authorities are struggling to cope, and the level of consultation and coordination between

the levels of governance – local, national and EU – and with NGOs remains too low. The objectives of the EU to provide reasonable conditions for refugees and migrants to process applications for asylum speedily are not being met fully, and member states are ignoring agreements to relocate asylum-seekers equitably across the EU. We badly need a long-term commitment – from national governments and the EU – to increase funding for cities and regions and to pursue a comprehensive policy that makes migration manageable.”

The debate also focused attention on global trends, the experiences of refugees, and efforts to integrate new arrivals in Europe into the labour market, with contributions from: [Laura Thompson](#), the deputy director-general of the International Organization for Migration; [Elisabeth Bartke](#) from the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry; and [Anila Noor](#), a refugee and member of the European Migrant Advisory Board.

Background

- The opinion – entitled “Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration” – considers the progress made by the EU on its [migration policy priorities](#) since 2015. The CoR supports many of the actions taken by the EU and describes reform of the current asylum system as “essential”. It draws attention, however, to weaknesses and to the need for more radical action – particularly to relieve pressure on the worst-affected islands and regions, and to address difficulties assessing asylum applications. The possibility of “transferring responsibility for examining asylum applications from national to EU level” should be considered, it argues. The opinion says that local and regional authorities need more funding and calls for them to be involved in every stage of framing and implementing of the migration agenda. It argues that the powers of a new EU agency – the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – and EU naval operation (Sophia) should be strengthened, and highlights that work is needed to produce a “coherent action plan” capable of ending smuggling and the migration-linked slave trade that has emerged in North Africa. It supports the ‘hotspot’ approach to managing exceptional migratory flows, through which EU agencies can intervene rapidly to help EU member states on the front line of migration, and suggests that ‘hotspots’ in non-EU countries could be “important” as a way of creating “safe routes” for migration. It notes, however, that guidelines are needed for managers of hotspots, with input from local and regional authorities.
- President Lambertz wrote to Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, on 21 February 2018 calling for a [budget](#) after 2020 capable of matching Europe’s ambitions. The European Committee of the Regions is asking for the next budget to be “increased to 1.3% of the Gross National Income of the EU 27 as an expenditure ceiling through national contributions and new EU own resources”. President Lambertz described the EU’s cohesion policy as “the EU’s most effective means of tackling today’s challenges: climate action, migration, sustainable growth, and research and innovation”.
- The [EU external investment plan](#) is designed to boost investment in the EU’s neighbourhood and Africa, particularly in fragile, conflict- and violence-affected countries, some of which are countries from where irregular migrants originate. The European Commission is contributing

€4.1 billion, with the aim of stimulating more than €44 billion of investments by 2020.

· A recent study of global migration by the [European Commission](#) found that the world's migrant population is increasing steadily. While the number of people forced to move by conflict or persecution is surging, environmental disasters are a bigger cause of displacement. Overall, the nature of migration has become more complex, with economic development spurring migration in the short term. Migration has become a big business, eased by digital technology. Globally, migration is primarily an urban phenomenon, with one in five migrants living in the world's 20 largest cities. Of legal migrants who arrive in the EU, more than half come to be re-unified with their family or on humanitarian grounds. Highly skilled migrants are heading primarily to other [OECD countries](#) rather than to the EU. The number of irregular migrant arriving by sea has dropped sharply (to 160,000 in 2017), but immigration remains the second greatest concern of Europeans (after terrorism). It was their principal concern in 2014-16.

Contact:

Andrew Gardner

Tel. +32 473 843 981

andrew.gardner@cor.europa.eu

What has happened since changes to vehicle tax rates were introduced?

This time last year, DVLA and the motor industry were gearing up for the new tax rules that came into force on 1 April 2017.



A lot has happened since, so I thought this would be a great time to update you and tell you about new changes on the horizon.

Tax reminders

Customers who bought a new car registered on or after 1 April 2017 will be getting their tax reminder (V11) through their letterbox from this month onwards.

These tax reminders will show the standard rate, or if the car had a list price of over £40,000, the standard rate plus the additional rate. See our [vehicle tax rates](#) for information.

New first registration service

During the past year, service designers here at DVLA have been working on our new first registration service. We have been working closely with manufacturers and dealers to ensure the service meets their needs as well as ours.

The new service will start the DVLA's [IT transformation](#), using APIs and cloud technology, while improving our internal IT estate.

Changes to tax rates for new diesel cars

In the Chancellor's [November budget](#), further changes to the way vehicle tax is calculated were announced. The change will apply to new diesel cars registered on or after 1 April 2018.

Put simply, new diesel cars registered from this date will have their first year rate calculated in line with the changes.

The rates will not apply to next-generation clean diesels. These are vehicles which are certified as meeting emissions limits in real driving conditions, known as Real Driving Emissions Step 2 (RDE2) standards.

The Chancellor also announced increases to current VED and standard rates in line with Retail Price Index (RPI) from the same date.

Other legislative changes

We have other changes to incorporate into our services. Some of these changes may be familiar to you, and include:

- Clean Air Zones (CAZ)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- World Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP)

There may be some of these that you, as a driver, will never know about or even need to. But we have to factor these into our processes when registering a vehicle for the first time.

No doubt there will be more changes to come and we need to make sure we can

introduce these with minimal disruption to our customers and stakeholders. We will continue to work closely with industry colleagues, trade bodies and motoring associations to keep moving forward. This helps us to improve our services and make them simple to understand and easy to use.

To check when the tax is due for your vehicle, go to gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax.

Follow DVLA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and subscribe to our [Digital Services Blog](#).

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Why we voted leave

On 23rd June 2016 17.4 million voters told Parliament we should leave the EU.

Leave voters voted to take back control.

We voted to take back control of our money, our laws and our borders.

We voted to be a sovereign people again.

The overarching aim is to restore our freedoms

To become self governing as we used to be

We wish our Parliaments to frame our laws

To levy and spend out taxes

To make our borders safe

To award the precious gift of citizenship to those we choose to invite

We did not vote in the belief that future Parliaments will always be wise

Nor that they will always get it right

We voted to restore powers to Parliament because it is our Parliament

We can lobby and influence it

We can dismiss it and replace the MPs when they no longer please.

I find it surprising that some find it difficult to understand this overriding wish

For it is based on our long standing pursuit of freedom

It springs from our history

The history of the UK is the story of the long march of every man and every woman to the vote

The story of asserting the rule of law against all, however mighty.

We prize the gift of freedom under the law for all on an equal basis

We share an aversion to slavery

A dislike of military rule

A resistance to arbitrary government

A rejection of the patronising errors of elites

A distaste for overmighty bureaucracies cramping our freedoms

A belief that we should be free to do whatever we please unless the laws prevents it

The signposts to democracy run through Magna Carta to the first Parliaments

From the 1660 settlement to the Glorious Revolution

From the Great Reform Act to the triumph of the suffragettes

We carelessly lost some of these freedoms,

casting away much of the power of our vote and voice

by passing powers to the European Union

We allowed the EU to impose laws we did not want

To levy taxes we disagreed with

And to spend our money as they saw fit

Brexit is designed to recall those lost powers

European Council conclusions on the Western Balkans and actions by Turkey

in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, 22 March 2018

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Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chairs review meeting of CAPFs

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh here today reviewed the administrative issues of Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) at a high level meeting.

While taking stock of the recruitment and promotion procedures of the CAPFs, Shri Rajnath Singh called for initiation of special mechanisms for reducing delays and fast-tracking recruitment process.

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Author: