

SPEECH BY H.E. VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA,

Edite Estrela

II High-level Interparliamentary Conference on Migration and Asylum in Europe | Session 2: The External dimension of migration and asylum policies

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Thank you, Juan.

Let me start by welcoming Eduardo CABRITA, Portugal's Minister for Home Affairs who is with us here in Lisbon.

I would also like to welcome Detlef SEIF, Member of the Committee on Internal Affairs and Community of the German Bundestag. These conferences started during the German Presidency, and we welcome the opportunity to have a German MP with us to share our trio partner's insights on the current state of play.

Dear Colleagues,

I will make my statement brief in order to give more time to our distinguished Speakers.

8 months after the New Pact on Asylum and Migration was presented by the European Commission, and half a year since our last high-level conference on these topics, we have seen concrete progress, particularly on the external dimension.

There now seems to be a broad consensus that by working towards establishing proactive relationships with other countries that include all dimensions of migration flow management, while also creating or upscaling existing migration mechanisms, Europe can bolster its resilience and strike a new balance between responsibility and solidarity.

One such example is the recent agreement on the Blue Card Directive, that will make it easier and more attractive for highly skilled third-country nationals to come and work in the EU. The potential benefits are evident. Europe's business and universities will be more competitive, placing them on an equal footing with entities from other countries who also seek to attract highly skilled talent.

This agreement further shows that consensus on these issues can indeed be reached, and we hope that with this debate, Parliamentarians will contribute, in a meaningful way, to this important discussion.

I share Juan's hope that work on other initiatives will move forward at an upbeat pace. As the COVID19 pandemic dies down and migration pressures increase, Europe urgently needs these instruments to provide an adequate response.



Let us always remember that Migration and Asylum policies are a shared competence between the Union and its Member-States, and that Europe's foundational values must be at the core of all policy decisions, be they internal, or in relation to our neighbouring countries.

These are the same values that define us, and the reason why so many seek Europe for protection, for work and for raising their families.

With that, dear colleagues, I give the floor to Mr. Cabrita for 8 minutes,

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