



RESOLUTION

HUMANITARIAN VISAS FOR CHRISTIAN MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Adopted at the YEPP Presidents Council
in Rome on 1st March 2014

Recognising:

- The ongoing conflicts and political instability in the Middle-East and Northern Africa have a disastrous impact on populations living in those countries, in particular minorities, such as Christians;
- That due to the presence of radical Islamic guerrillas in those conflict zones, Christian minorities are at a particular danger and are subject to persecution by radical Islamic groups;
- That since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, around 60% of the Christian minority have fled their country to escape persecution¹;
- That in Egypt, there are regions in which the safety of Christian Egyptians is still at risk;
- That DG Development and Cooperation has recognised “Christians aren’t always welcomed at the same level as others in refugee camps”²;
- That respect for human rights is at stake, and YEPP has committed to human rights protection on numerous occasions;
- The need to act on a European level, as asylum policy falls partly under EU competence, and as sanction mechanisms in such situations are most effective on an EU-wide scale.

Acknowledging:

- That the UNCHR has been recommending the use of humanitarian visas as an appropriate answer to refugee flows from Middle-Eastern conflict zones;

¹ Studies by Bernard Heyberger, director of l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris.

² Raffaella Iodice, department chief at DG Development and Cooperation.

- That Europe has an undeniable historical link with Christians in the Middle-East;
- That this link makes Europe the natural refuge for Christians endangered in the Middle-East and gives EU Member States a moral responsibility to protect those Christian minorities as much as possible;
- Therefore, action at European level and joint action of all Member States is required as an appropriate answer to that situation.

YEPP calls on:

- EU Members States to offer humanitarian visas to Christians from Middle-Eastern conflict zones;
- The EU and its Member States to sanction, via a refusal of visas and/or a freezing of assets, persons, groups and States persecuting Christian minorities in the Middle-East.