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A new deal between the EU and Turkey on immigration rules

Notizie

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[Segnala ad un amico](#) [Stampa](#) *Giovedì, 24 Aprile 2014*Foto: [xinwen.hao0039.com](#)

Last month the European Parliament sealed [a deal between the EU and Turkey regarding immigration issues](#). The agreement obliges the parts to take back migrants entering or living clandestinely on either territory – Turkey and EU soil. In return for its commitment, Turkey will receive EU financial and technical assistance aimed at building up its border police and installing border surveillance equipment. This could include, amongst others, purchase of border surveillance equipment, establishment of reception centres and border police structures, and support to training activities, in full respect of the

current rules governing EU external assistance. These measures should help Turkey to make its borders with neighbouring countries, such as Syria, Iran and Iraq, more secure.

This deal should provide EU member States some leverage to limit the tide of immigrants from Northern Africa and the Middle East, in particular for those countries that are the main destination for undocumented migrants entering in Europe from Turkey. Frontex, the European Union's border policing agency, [estimated that a vast majority of the crossings in 2011 occurred at the Greece-Turkey border](#), which is now known as [the privileged back door for undocumented immigrants](#). Last year, Frontex said, more than 55,000 people crossed the border, a 17 percent rise from the year before. Greece is therefore likely to be the main beneficiary of this agreement.

The return rule would apply not only to EU nationals and Turks, but also to third-country nationals who enter either the EU or Turkey via the other. In the last few years, Turkey has come under criticism because of its liberal visa requirements, which make it easy for immigrants to legally enter the country and then move on. Citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Syria and Iran, among many other nations, do not need a visa to enter the country: once in Turkey, [it has been reported](#), they often try to find a way to cross the Greek border without the necessary documents.

Renate Sommer, a German Member of Parliament and the rapporteur of this agreement, [said the deal will benefit both the EU and Turkey](#). Ms Sommer added that the readmission agreement would "make a significant contribution to curbing irregular immigration into the EU via Turkey, help combat cross-border crime, particularly human trafficking, and relieve the pressure on Greece and hence on the EU as a whole". "However", [she added](#) "we will see whether Turkey will readmit people who illegally immigrated into the EU to its territory."

The agreement has been reached after more than ten years of negotiations. It was 2002 when the EU started talks with the Turkish government to agree on readmission procedures for undocumented immigrants. The EU and Turkey were able to reach an agreement when [the EU took into consideration Ankara's demand for visa liberalization for Turkish citizens who want to travel to Europe](#). In December 2013 the Commission [published a roadmap 'Towards a Visa-Free Regime with Turkey'](#). The aim of the EU-Turkey visa liberalisation dialogue is to make progress towards the elimination of the visa obligation currently imposed on the Turkish citizens travelling to the Schengen area for a short term visit. Meanwhile, the agreement on the return of undocumented migrants has to be formally ratified by both parties and will take effect two months after this step has been completed.

Lorenzo Piccoli*This article is published on [Oneworld Finland](#) and translated also in [dutch](#)*

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