

European Parliament backs EPP Group call on Member States to respect free movement

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A Joint Resolution adopted today by the European Parliament and initiated by the EPP Group calls on Member States to respect the fundamental right of free movement in the EU. The European Parliament strongly contests the position taken by some European leaders to implement measures undermining this right. Members of the European Parliament ask for the enforcement of the Union law so as to guarantee that all EU workers are treated equally and not discriminated against, irrespective of their EU country of origin.

The European Parliament stressed the risk of a rise in racism and xenophobia if the debate is not addressed rationally and acknowledged the fact that free movement of EU workers has become a question of a political campaign for some political parties.

“The ridiculous debate taking place in the UK and other Member States has to end. It is being fuelled by populist politicians who want to win votes and mask their administrative failures and their countries’ unfavourable economic performance. These politicians seem to ignore three facts: first, that free movement is a fundamental right of all European citizens; second, it has been proven that mobile workers contribute to the economic development of their host countries; and third, that you cannot gain votes this way. The European Parliament reminded them of that today”, said Marian-Jean Marinescu, EPP Group Vice-Chairman and author of the Resolution.

Marinescu said that it is important not to confuse free movement with access to social systems:

“You don’t limit a fundamental right and you don’t blame an entire nation because a very small number of beneficiaries break the law.”

“The right to free movement is one of the four fundamental freedoms in the European Union and will always be defended by the EPP Group against the populist propaganda”, said European Parliament Vice-President Jacek Protasiewicz, a Member of the EPP Group.

“We shall not forget the important benefits it brings to the European economy. The numbers are clear. Europeans migrate to other countries to work, not to claim social welfare benefits. Despite the requests of the European Commission, no European government was able to provide any evidence to the contrary. These rights come with obligations. However, it is the governments’ responsibility to make sure that the law is obeyed. Spreading discriminating stereotypes and false accusations is not the way to do it”, Protasiewicz concluded.