



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Martin Schulz
President
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz
Paul-Henri Spaak 09B011
1047 Brussels

30 November 2015

Mr Schulz,

I write with regard to the Syrian refugee crisis and the solution that Europe must find.

It would appear that the pan-European solution being suggested by Germany, particularly the quota system, is not agreed upon by several other Member States. Furthermore, it would also appear that there is considerable pressure being placed upon these states to comply and the language with which the German media is discussing these negotiations is increasingly intimidating. I feel that this kind of politics is an anathema to the ideals of the European project.

It is my view that individual nation states should be able to formulate their own responses to this crisis that better suit these countries' own resources and capabilities. For crises of this scale I feel that it is very important that sovereign nations are able to take these decisions. For example, I am particularly proud of the actions that our Prime Minister, David Cameron, has taken to take refugees directly from the camps in the Middle East and over £1 billion in aid.

As things stand at the moment this single EU-wide approach is being challenged and misunderstood. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Romania and Hungary should be respected if they have a different perspective and different ways of responding to this crisis. We may not agree with some of their policies, but if we want Europe to be united, we should accept our diversified viewpoints.

The European project is a positive project. If one country has a positive solution, then it should be proposed and debated. If it is forced upon anybody, it is very likely to be rejected by some, who could then become even more reluctant to compromise. Germany, with its generous social system, has recently had a policy of 'no limit' to how many refugees the country will give asylum to. While noble, I worry that this policy would encourage already desperate people to risk their lives taking the dangerous journey to Europe. It was then suggested that Germany may be willing to close the Schengen area and not accept any more refugees. As I am sure you will understand, this has placed many countries on the borders of the EU in a very difficult position.

Poland, one of the countries which stood up to the EU forced quota system, has been heavily criticised by the German media for doing so. I would like to point out that Poland has given out 800,000 visas to Ukrainians fleeing from the conflict in the eastern parts of their country last year and has had a sizable Muslim Tatar minority since the 15th Century.

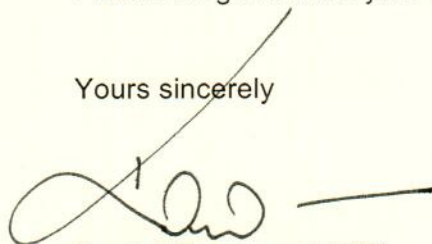
I was particularly concerned when it was suggested that if Eastern European countries would not willingly accept the refugee quotas, they may be forced to do so. Selim Chazbijewicz, founder of the Muslim Tatars Association of the Polish Republic, said that this would be wholly unacceptable and that the region is simply not prepared to take large numbers of refugees, particularly numbers that are not decided by these countries themselves. It will take many years for the Central and Eastern European countries to reach the GDP levels of Western European countries and the ability to accept and assimilate more refugees. These countries are very sensitive to pressure from stronger powers and I worry that this fear could give way to disunity and division in the Union if provoked.

Britain prides itself with a tremendous foreign aid delivered to those in need. 7p of every £10 from taxpayers' money is spent on overseas humanitarian aid and development and we have spent almost a billion GBP solely on supporting the Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. I only hope that other European countries follow suit. In cooperation with grassroot movements we should find more ways of stabilising the conflicted regions and saving as many lives as possible but we can only manage to do that by engaging in dialogue, positive communication and compromise.

It is important that all nations in the European Union work together as a Union to find a way forward that works in the interests of both individual nations and the refugees we must give aid to. This crisis may tear Europe apart and that is not in anybody's interest.

I would be grateful for your comment and consideration in this respect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Kawczynski', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Kawczynski MP
Shrewsbury and Atcham
Member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee