Abstract: “A new European migration policy?”

The “EU-Turkey- Statement” and the Partnership Framework: The emergence of a new European migration policy?

Abstract

In March of this year, EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey signed the “EU-Turkey Statement” in an attempt to end irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and to replace it with legal channels of resettlement of refugees to the European Union and a wide array of measures for protection and temporary integration in Turkey. In June, the European Commission announced its “New Migration Partnership Framework with third countries” with the aim to establish comprehensive migration partnerships with external partners by use of the full range of policies in the areas of neighbourhood policy, trade, mobility, energy, security or digital policy. Other important milestones had been agreed already before, namely the Valletta Declaration, Action Plan and Emergency Trust Fund from November 2015 to enhance cooperation with African countries. The “New York Declaration” as outcome document of the “United Nations General Assembly Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants” from September 2016 added a “global dimension” to the debate on an international response to one of the biggest challenges of our time.

The above initiatives contributed to overcoming last year’s political deadlock and initiated a process of actual policy-making, dialogue and negotiations between the EU and important external partners. It is, however; also clear that they are important steps towards more holistic and better functioning approaches but many more steps will have to be made in order to reach functioning and durable solutions. Although it is not decided yet which direction the four instruments will take in the end, they can be perceived as important landmarks on the path to a new European foreign migration policy already now.