



European Agenda on Migration: Good progress in managing migration flows needs to be sustained

Brussels, 6 September 2017

In four progress reports adopted today, the Commission is calling on all parties to sustain and further accelerate the good progress made in managing irregular migration flows, protecting the EU external borders and supporting the frontline Member States under pressure.

With 27,695 persons relocated so far, the EU **relocation** mechanism is working and delivering results. It is crucial that Member States relocate all eligible candidates from Italy and Greece as swiftly as possible. The **EU-Turkey Statement** continues to ensure consistently low numbers of irregular arrivals in Greece and enabled almost 10,000 Syrians to be resettled to the EU. During the summer months, irregular crossings and deaths in the **Central Mediterranean** decreased significantly, reflecting also the concerted efforts by the EU, in particular Italy. The tools of the **European Border and Coast Guard** are now in place, but more efforts are needed from Member States to take full advantage of the Agency's expanded mandate on returns.

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"All EU actors have worked hard together to manage migration flows, to protect our external borders and to support the frontline Member States. We're on the right track and the results can be seen on the ground. However, the challenges and risk factors of migration remain. So we must continue to improve our work to save lives, to put in place safe and legal pathways for those who deserve protection and to return those who have no right to stay."*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"When Europe works together in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity, we make progress and achieve concrete results, both inside and outside the EU. We can clearly see this today – with irregular flows reduced and legal resettlement of refugees increased, the operationalisation on the ground of a common European Border and Coast Guard, and the joint actions taken in support of Italy and along the Central Mediterranean route. We also see intra-EU solidarity: with the relocation programme delivering results and almost all registered applicants having been relocated from Greece and Italy. This success now needs to be sustained on all these fronts."*

Relocation and resettlement – solidarity works

Two years after the launch of the emergency mechanism, relocation continues to show a positive trend confirming the significant acceleration of relocations observed in 2017, with an average of 2,300 transfers per month since February 2017, to almost all Member States. As of 4 September, over **27,695** persons (19,244 from Greece, 8,451 from Italy) have been relocated. However, with around 2,800 persons still to be relocated from Greece and new applicants arriving in Italy every day, continuous efforts are needed on all sides. Member States must speed up the processing of relocation transfers and provide enough pledges for all candidates. Italy needs to accelerate the identification and registration of eligible candidates (in particular Eritreans).

A number of Member States (**Malta** and **Latvia**) have already fulfilled their allocations for Greece, whereas others (**Finland**, **Lithuania**, **Luxembourg**, **Sweden**) are close to doing so. **Malta** and **Finland** are also close to fulfil their allocations for Italy. The Commission also welcomes that **Austria** has started relocating from Italy and that the first relocations from Italy to **Slovakia** are currently being prepared. The **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Poland** remain in breach of their legal obligations, and have not relocated a single person (Hungary and Poland) or have not pledged relocation places for more than a year (Czech Republic). This is why, on 26 July, the Commission moved its infringement procedures forward and sent [reasoned opinions](#) to these Member States. The Commission welcomes today's ruling by the European Court of Justice in which the Court confirmed the validity of the second Council Decision on relocation and dismissed the actions brought by Slovakia and Hungary.

The legal obligation for Member States to relocate does not end in September. The Council Decisions on relocation apply to all eligible persons arriving in Greece or Italy until 26 September 2017. This means that eligible applicants should still be relocated thereafter. Therefore, it is crucial that all

Member States, in particular Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as well as those that have not used up their allocation in full, step-up their efforts to relocate all eligible applicants.

The EU **resettlement** scheme adopted in July 2015 is due to be successfully completed, with Member States and Schengen Associated States having already resettled **17,305** of the 22,504 agreed people. Under the EU-Turkey Statement, a total of 8,834 **Syrians** have been resettled from Turkey to the EU so far, including 1,028 new transfers since the last report. In total 22,518 have been resettled under both EU-level resettlement schemes since their launch. On 4 July 2017, the Commission launched a **new resettlement pledging exercise** for 2018 to ensure the continuation of the EU's collective resettlement efforts until the Commission's proposal for an EU resettlement framework is adopted. Member States are invited to submit their pledges for 2018 by 15 September 2017, with an additional **focus on resettlement from North Africa** and the **Horn of Africa**, while continuing resettlements from Turkey. The Commission has set aside €377.5 million to support the resettlement of at least 37,750 people (€10,000 per person).

EU-Turkey Statement – continues to deliver concrete results

The EU-Turkey Statement continues to deliver concrete results and play a key role in ensuring effective management of migratory flows along the Eastern Mediterranean route.

Despite a slight increase in arrivals during the summer, consistent with the seasonal trends observed for the same period in 2016, the number of **daily crossings** from Turkey to the Greek islands has remained low since the last report on 13 June, with an average of **75 arrivals per day**. Overall, arrivals have decreased by 97% since the Statement became operational and the significant drop in numbers of lives lost in the Aegean has been maintained. However, significant additional efforts are still needed to reduce the backlog of asylum applications and address the insufficient pre-return processing and detention capacity in Greece to improve returns. In total, 1,896 irregular migrants have been returned to Turkey since the date of the EU-Turkey Statement. There is also progress in other areas of the Statement, with the Commission accelerating its efforts to deliver the financial support under the **Facility for Refugees in Turkey**. Of the €3 billion allocated in funding for 2016-2017, contracts have already been signed for a total of €1.66 billion and disbursements have increased to €838 million. The number of vulnerable refugees supported by the Emergency Social Safety Net has rapidly increased from 600,000 to 860,000 persons, and is expected to reach 1.3 million refugees by the end of 2017.

European Border and Coast Guard – more efforts on return needed

The roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency has continued over the past months with **two additional operations launched to assist Spain** in the Western Mediterranean. This brings the total number of European Border and Coast Guard officers currently supporting Member States on the ground to 1,700. However, deployment gaps still persist and no new contributions of equipment have been made to the Rapid Reaction Pools since April 2017. Member States need to urgently deliver on their commitments and fill the remaining gaps to ensure effective management of the EU's external borders.

The Agency has completed **vulnerability assessments** for a number of Member States and the national authorities now need to ensure a timely implementation of the recommendations provided. The Agency has also supported 193 operations returning 8,606 illegally staying third-country nationals, which represents an increase of more than 160% in return operations in comparison with the first six months of 2016. However, the full spectrum of the Agency's capabilities is still not being utilised by Member States and further efforts are needed to fully assume its broadened **mandate in the field of return**. The Agency and Member States should work to better align return activities and make full use of the Agency's strengthened instruments and tools.

Partnership Framework and Central Mediterranean Route – shows decrease in arrivals

Measures put in place along the Central Mediterranean Route and with partners in Africa are beginning to show results. The number of **deaths at sea** has significantly decreased over the summer months, alongside a substantial **reduction in the number of migrants** crossing the Central Mediterranean Route. The EU's efforts continue to save lives, break the business model of smugglers and traffickers, fight root causes and work in partnership with third countries, while upholding European values and the respect for human rights. Implementation needs to continue at the same pace and intensity on the Action Plan on measures to support Italy (adopted on 4 July 2017) and following the establishment of the the Contact Group for the Central Mediterranean Route and the Paris meeting of 28 August 2017. You can find the full press release [here](#).

For More Information

Fifteenth Report on Relocation and Resettlement

[Communication: Fifteenth Report on Relocation and Resettlement](#)

[Annex 1: Relocations from Greece](#)

[Annex 2: Relocations from Italy](#)

[Annex 3: Relocations from Italy and Greece](#)

[Annex 4: Resettlement State of Play](#)

[Factsheet: Relocation and Resettlement - sharing responsibility and increasing legal pathways to Europe](#)

[Factsheet: Managing migration: EU financial support to Italy](#)

[Factsheet: Managing migration: EU financial support to Greece](#)

[The European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Council Decision on the relocation of 40,000 people from Italy and Greece](#)

[Council Decision on the relocation of 120,000 people from Italy and Greece](#)

[Council Conclusions on Resettlement of 20,000 persons in need of international protection](#)

[EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016](#)

Seventh Progress Report on the EU-Turkey Statement

[Communication: Seventh Report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement](#)

[Annex 1: Progress on the implementation of the Joint Action Plan](#)

[Annex 2: The Facility for Refugees in Turkey - projects committed/decided, contracted and disbursed](#)

[Factsheet: The Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)

[First Annual Report on Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)

[Operational implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement](#): Member States pledges and deployments for the European Border and Coast Guard and EASO operations - returns and resettlements

[EU-Turkey Statement](#) of 18 March

[EU-Turkey Action Plan of 15 October](#), activated on 29 November

[Appointment of the EU Coordinator](#)

Fifth Progress Report on the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard

[Communication: Fifth Report on the operationalisation of the European Border and Coast Guard](#)

[Annex: Gaps of human resources and equipment](#)

[Factsheet: Securing Europe's External Borders: The European Border and Coast Guard](#)

[Securing Europe's Borders: European Commission website](#)

[European Border and Coast Guard Agency website](#)

Fifth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration

[Communication: Fifth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Press release: Partnership Framework on Migration: Joint management of migration shows positive results](#)

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