



Progress following Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting: Second Contact Points Video Conference

Brussels, 5 November 2015

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On 4 November, a second video conference was held between the contact points (see Annex) nominated after the Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting held on the 25 October. The objective was to follow up on the agreement reached at the meeting and set out in the [Leaders' Statement](#). Senior officials from the countries and agencies present at the meeting had a detailed discussion on selected priority actions of the 17-point plan of action:

Leaders' Statement Points 5 and 6 relating to support and shelter to refugees:

The Greek Government provided an update on their planning for the **delivery of 50,000 reception places in Greece** before the end of the year, including 20,000 through host family and rent subsidy arrangements in cooperation with the UNHCR which is well under way.

Other countries discussed progress on additional reception capacities capable of providing longer term shelter, which are being put in place in view of reaching an **additional 50,000 such reception places along the Western Balkans route** by the end of the year. While the work is still ongoing, further commitments were made yesterday, inter alia:

- Serbia committed an additional 3,000 reception places on top of the 3,000 places already pledged last week, indicating that work is under way
- Croatia plans to reach a total of 5,000 places
- Slovenia reconfirmed its commitment to provide 2,000 places
- Austria indicated that work and discussions to extend their reception capacity are ongoing

European Commission officials will visit national capitals during the coming week to discuss the needs and financial assistance to make swift progress on the ground with these operations, with full support of the UNHCR. Officials will be in Zagreb on 6 November and in Ljubljana on 9 November.

Leaders' Statement Point 9 relating to ongoing information exchange:

The Commission confirmed that the daily exchange of information is functioning, and thanked all participants for their commitment to this important exercise. To facilitate this exchange further, Frontex and EASO will provide support for the daily coordination of information flows, streamlining the exercise for the country contact points. The new system will also allow for automated daily reporting and weekly analysis.

Leaders' Statement Point 13 on border management:

A broad discussion on the different border protection points allowed for an exchange of information between the countries and organisations on the call, including the following key points:

- Slovenia updated the group on the planned deployment of 400 police officers from other Member States in Slovenia. There are currently 33 police officers deployed in the country, an additional 40 officers will be deployed by the end of the week, and a further 177 will be deployed within the next ten days. Slovenia expects 250 police officers to be on the ground by mid-November. Several contact points indicated that further pledges would arrive shortly.
- Frontex and the Commission insisted on the importance of the relevant countries responding to the proposed operational plans from Frontex to enable Frontex to deploy its teams by mid-November in Greece and Croatia.
- Frontex provided an update on upscaling the Poseidon Sea Joint Operation in Greece. A total of 256 Frontex experts are in Greece as part of Operation Poseidon, with 35 experts now on the Greek islands supporting identification of asylum seekers in the Hotspots, and a plan to have 143 experts operational there by the end of January.

- Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania all provided updates on ongoing bilateral contacts concerning the strengthening of their management of the external land border. Serbia and Croatia provided information about their cross border operational and cooperation measures.

The group will reconvene again on 10 November for the next weekly video conference, and will continue their bilateral contacts in the meantime to ensure full communication, coordination and cooperation to address the migration flows and to ensure humane treatment of those seeking asylum in Europe.

Background

On Wednesday 21 October, European Commission President Juncker called for a Leaders' Meeting on refugee flows along the Western Balkans route to address the emergency situation unfolding along this route.

At the meeting, all 12 leaders – including the President of the Commission – agreed to nominate contact points within 24 hours to allow daily exchanges and coordination to achieve the gradual, controlled and orderly movement of persons along the Western Balkans route and to monitor the implementation of the 17-point plan agreed on 21 October.

Attending the Leaders' Meeting were the Heads of State or Government of Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Council, the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the EU, the future Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were in attendance. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) were also represented.

For more information

[Web Page on the Leaders' Meeting on the Western Balkans Route](#)

[Leaders' Statement](#)

[Press Release on First Progress after the Leaders' Meeting](#)

[Press release on first contact points video conference](#)

[All press materials on the EU Migration Agenda](#)

Annex: National Contact Points – Western Balkans Route

Country / Organisation	National Contact	Function
COMMISSION	Mr. Richard SZOSTAK	Diplomatic Adviser, Cabinet of the President
PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL	Mr Pascal SCHUMACHER	Adviser, Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU
FUTURE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL	Mr. Alexander SOREL	Adviser, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU
EUROPEAN COUNCIL	Mr. Hugo BRADY	Adviser, Cabinet of the President
ALBANIA	Mr. Sander LLESHI	Adviser for security in the Cabinet of Prime Minister
AUSTRIA	Mr. Raphael STERNFELD	International Affairs Adviser, Federal Chancellery
BULGARIA	Ms. Petya PARVANOV	Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior
GERMANY	Mr. Uwe CORSEPIUS	European Policy Adviser, Federal Chancellery
Former YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	Ms. Anastasija ILIESKA	State Secretary, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia
GREECE	Ms. Eleni TAKOU	Chief policy Adviser of the Minister of Migration
CROATIA	Ms. Maja BOGDAN	Deputy Sherpa, Government of the Republic of Croatia

HUNGARY	Mr. Tibor LAKATOS	Police Colonel, Head of the Operation Centre of the Ministry of Interior
ROMANIA	Mr. Leonard ORBAN	EU Affairs Sherpa of the President
SERBIA	Mr. Aleksandar VULIN	Minister of Social Affairs, Government coordinator for Migration Issues
SLOVENIA	Mr. Igor MALLY	EU Affairs Sherpa, Government of the Republic of Slovenia
UNHCR	Ms. Sophie MAGENNIS	Head of Policy and Support Unit
FRONTEX	Mr. David REISENZEIN	Liaison Officer
EASO	Mr. Mark CAMILLERI	Adviser to the Executive Director

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Press contacts:

[Tove ERNST](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)

[Tim McPHIE](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 02)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)