



European Agenda on Migration: Commission calls on all parties to sustain progress and make further efforts

Strasbourg, 13 June 2017

Ahead of next week's European Council, the Commission is presenting four progress reports on measures taken under the European Agenda on Migration to stabilise the flows and better manage the external borders.

With most Member States having shown that relocation works if there is political will, the Commission is calling on those Member States who have not yet done so to take steps to comply with their legal obligations and contribute fairly and proportionally to the scheme. The Commission is also making a renewed call to further accelerate the roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard and to fill persistent gaps in manpower and equipment as swiftly as possible. The EU-Turkey Statement continued to deliver results - as shown by a consistent reduction in irregular crossings to Greece and the successful resettlement of over 6,000 Syrians given safe and legal pathways to Europe. Continuous efforts are still needed to ensure the full implementation of the Statement and in particular to improve the processing of asylum requests in Greece.

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Two years after the launch of the European Agenda on Migration, our joint efforts to manage migratory flows are starting to bear fruit. But the push factors for migration to Europe remain and the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean continues. As the weather improves, we must redouble our cooperation – working with third countries, protecting our EU external borders, together giving refuge to those who need it and ensuring that those who have no right to remain in the EU are quickly returned. We can only effectively manage migration in Europe if we all work together in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility."*

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Our Union is based on solidarity and the sharing of responsibility. These fundamental values apply to all our policies and migration is no exception. We cannot and we will not leave those Member States with an external border on their own. And when it comes to relocation, let me be crystal clear: the implementation of the Council Decisions on relocation is a legal obligation, not a choice."*

Relocation and resettlement: all should contribute

The pace of **relocation** has significantly increased in 2017 with almost 10,300 persons relocated since January — a fivefold increase compared to the same period in 2016. As of 9 June, the total number of relocations stands at **20,869** (13,973 from Greece, 6,896 from Italy). With almost all Member States now relocating from Italy and Greece, it is feasible to relocate all those eligible (currently around 11,000 registered in Greece and around 2,000 registered in Italy, with arrivals in 2016 and 2017 still to be registered) by September 2017. In any case, Member States' legal obligation to relocate will not cease after September: the Council Decisions on relocation apply to all persons arriving in Greece or Italy until 26 September 2017 and eligible applicants must be relocated within a reasonable timeframe thereafter.

Over the last months, the Commission has repeatedly called on those Member States that have not yet relocated a single person, or that are not pledging to relocate, to do so. Regrettably, despite these repeated calls, the **Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland**, in breach of their legal obligations stemming from the Council Decisions and their commitments to Greece, Italy and other Member States, have not yet taken the necessary action. Against this background, and as indicated in the previous Relocation and Resettlement Report, the Commission has decided to launch infringement procedures against these three Member States.

Progress on **resettlement** continues to be well on track with nearly three quarters (16,419) of the 22,504 resettlements agreed in July 2015 having already been carried out. Resettlements under the EU-Turkey Statement reached a new **record high in May 2017** with almost 1,000 Syrian refugees being provided with safe and legal pathways to Europe. The total number of resettlements from Turkey under the Statement now stands at **6,254**.

EU-Turkey Statement: concrete results in managing migration jointly

More than a year after the EU-Turkey Statement was agreed by EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey, and despite the challenges, the Statement continues to deliver concrete results, ensuring an effective management of migratory flows along the Eastern Mediterranean route.

The number of **daily crossings** from Turkey to the Greek islands remains at **around 50 per day** and, despite recent tragic incidents, the number of lives lost in the Aegean has fallen substantially. Overall, arrivals have decreased by 97% since the Statement became operational. The pace of **return operations** has seen some positive developments with an additional 311 returns carried out since the previous report in March, bringing the total number of migrants returned to 1,798. However, arrivals still outpace the number of returns from the Greek islands to Turkey, leading to pressure on the reception structure on the islands. To increase returns and improve the conditions on the islands, additional efforts from the Greek authorities, EU Agencies and Member States are needed.

Progress in other areas of the Statement is also ongoing, with the continuing efforts by the EU and Turkey to accelerate the delivery of the financial support under the **Facility for Refugees in Turkey**. Almost all of the funding for 2016-2017 has now been allocated (€2.9 billion out of €3 billion) and contracts have already been signed for a total of €1.57 billion. Currently, more than 600,000 refugees in Turkey are supported by the Emergency Social Safety Net and the number of Syrians supported through direct cash transfers is expected to increase to 1.3 million.

The Commission has increased its efforts to facilitate the swift finalisation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the **Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme** and is also continuing to encourage Turkey to complete the seven outstanding benchmarks of the **Visa Liberalisation Roadmap**.

European Border and Coast Guard: accelerated roll-out needed

Progress in fully rolling out **the European Border and Coast Guard** has continued over the past months. With over 1,600 officers supporting national forces in Greece (944), Italy (402), Bulgaria (166) and Spain (65), the EU's external borders are better protected than ever before. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency completed the **vulnerability assessments** of Schengen States' external borders and concrete recommendations have been addressed for 20 Schengen States. Further progress has been made in negotiations with Serbia on the status agreement and the Commission intends to shortly propose the launch of negotiations with other neighbouring countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

The pace of **return operations** organised by the European Border and Coast Guard has continued to grow, with 6,799 irregularly staying migrants returned in 2017 so far, representing an increase of over 157% compared to the same period of last year. However, Member States need to rapidly increase their use of the Agency's reinforced capacity on return and make full use of the support offered by the Agency for the organisation of return operations. Additional efforts are also needed from Member States to respond to calls for deployment for ongoing operations and close the gaps both in human resources and technical equipment. These gaps need to be fulfilled as a matter of priority to ensure the continuation of ongoing operations and the full availability of the Rapid Reaction Pools, in particular of the equipment pool to which only 14 Member States have so far contributed.

Partnership Framework and Central Mediterranean Route: tangible progress

The Commission is also presenting today the results and lessons learned under the **Partnership Framework on Migration**, one year after its launch. Progress has been made in the fight against traffickers with closer cooperation with key countries in Africa to tackle migration flows through the Central Mediterranean route, with a strong focus on cooperation with Libya. The EU Trust Fund has supported political priorities, mobilising around €1.9 billion for 118 projects in one year to address the root causes of migration and supporting better migration management in countries of origin and transit. However, further efforts are needed in a number of areas, in particular to step up return and readmission to partner countries (for more information, see [press release](#)).

For More Information

Thirteenth Report on Relocation and Resettlement

[Communication: Thirteenth 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](#)

[Factsheet: Managing the refugee crisis: 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](#)

Sixth Progress Report on the EU-Turkey Statement

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

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

[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 Frontex 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](#)

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

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

[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](#)

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