



SENSITIVE*:
Solidarity Platform “Pact”

SOLIDARITY PLATFORM PACT
STATUS CALL WITH THE CONTRIBUTING STATES ON FINANCIAL SOLIDARITY
THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER
OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

On 20 October, DG HOME convened a status call **with the contributing States on the financial solidarity** strand of the Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM). The meeting was chaired by Ms Nacira Boulehouat, Head of Unit Migration Management Coordination DG HOME, and served as an opportunity to update on the project proposals that the Commission has so far received from the MED5 countries and discuss the potential interest of the contributing States in these projects.

The **Commission** informed that it is still waiting for more information from the MED5 countries on their project proposals and summarized what the benefitting States have communicated so far:

MT	Acquisition of equipment for surveillance operations Repairs of sea vessel of the Libyan Coast Guard
CY	Upgrading of First Reception Centre (Pournara), incl. screening and quarantine areas* Support the Office of Voluntary Returns Hosting Centre for vulnerable applicants*
IT	Transfers from Lampedusa Transfers of returnees to detention centres Cultural/linguistic mediators Support to authorities of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya
EL	Strengthening of border in Evros region Safe areas for UAMs on the islands Energy and water savings in camps* Integration (see 5 sub projects)*
ES	<i>No concrete proposals yet but general interest in:</i> IT support for asylum agency Border controls in third countries

**Detailed fiches have not yet been shared with DG HOME*

The **contributing Member and Associated States** presented their areas of interest and possible contribution proposals:

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CZ reiterated that its programming for 2023 needs to be completed by the end of this year; therefore, new budget can be dedicated to the Solidarity Declaration as of next year (January). CZ expressed its interest in the following projects: maritime surveillance (MT), safe areas for UAMs (EL), and transfers from Lampedusa (IT) under the condition that an NGO or international organization acts as implementing partner. CZ confirmed its willingness to provide support through experts and informed about bilateral discussions with CY on two projects on livelihoods in Lebanon (€730,000, NGOs as implementing partners), with IT on a border management project in Libya implemented by ICMPD, as well as a grant agreement on returns with CY signed on 7 October (€1 million for 6 months until June 2023).

NL reiterated its willingness to support reception facilities for vulnerable people and integration of beneficiaries of international protection and excluded support in third countries, at least for the moment. NL is already in bilateral discussions with EL to see which specific projects can be part of NL contribution under the VSM, discussing in particular integration projects and an integration App (Participate), as well as the extension of their existing support to housing (shelters for young vulnerables). NL will also look into the possibility to support EL with its guardianship framework for three months and CY on returns.

CH confirmed its interest in the EL project on the creation of safe areas for unaccompanied minors and informed of a new agreement signed with EL on substantial support over the next five years with a volume of CHF40 million. The support to the EL project would be foreseen to be financed outside the scope of this agreement. A second agreement with CY covering similar priorities is also in the making, focusing mainly on the upgrading of a centre other than Pournara and returns. CH informed that these two agreements had been planned before the launch of the VSM, while it confirmed its interest in projects in third countries, namely Northern Africa, for the next budgetary year and upon agreement with the MED5. Finally, CH clarified that its budget depends on the number of projects and the timeline.

DE informed of the need to clarify with EL whether there is still a need for the ISBIG project, which focuses on the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in the economic and social field. Negotiations with EL have still not finalized and DE, who is also participating in the VSM with relocation pledges, would not be interested in contributing to other projects.

DK cannot make any financial commitments until the new government takes over after the upcoming elections.

Regarding **procedural constraints**, such as programming of funds, framework agreements/MoU and legislative steps, **CH** flagged that these would depend on whether the implementing partner is a national administration (with which an agreement is needed) or an NGO/international organisation (for which a simpler contract would be sufficient). **CZ** also added that for internal projects in the MED5 countries, support can be directly provided to the national administration upon the conclusion of an agreement/MoU but for projects in the external dimension, an NGO or international organisation as implementing partner is needed.

The **Commission** reiterated its role under the Solidarity Declaration and underlined that all projects need to abide by EU law and fundamental rights, while projects under the VSM are bilateral agreements and are not financed by EU budget. On projects in the external dimension, it is important to seek coherence and complementarity, especially with regard to existing Action Plans, regional projects in third countries or discussions in MOCADDEM.

Operational Conclusions and Next Steps

- The Commission will organise a SP Pact meeting on 27 October. Invitations will be sent out soon.
- No meeting will take place in the week of 31 October.

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- The contributing States to inform the Commission about bilateral discussions on projects with the MED5.
- The Commission to share an overview table of projects submitted by the MED5 and discussed bilaterally between contributing and benefitting States.