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**NOTE**

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
N° prev. doc.:	WK 16820/2023 INIT
Subject:	Action File to follow up on the EU action plan for the Eastern Mediterranean route


In view of the Moadem Roundtable of 26 July 2024, delegations will find attached the Action file to follow up on the EU action plan for the Eastern Mediterranean route.

**ACTION FILE TO FOLLOW UP ON THE EU ACTION PLAN FOR THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE**

Action	Lead actor(s)	Status	Way ahead incl. timeline	Comments
<i><b>I. Preventing irregular departures, combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings</b></i>				
<b>1. Strengthen comprehensive engagement with countries of origin and transit in Asia and Africa</b>	Commission, MS, EU DEL	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the implementation of programmes such as the Global Action addressing Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, and the PROTECT programme.</li> <li>- Continue cooperation within the framework of the comprehensive migration and mobility dialogues launched with Bangladesh and Pakistan in 2023 and explore the possibility to develop with them anti-smuggling operational partnership (ASOPs).</li> <li>- Roll out an EU-funded Common Operational Partnership project (EASTEAMS) between Pakistan and MS.</li> <li>- Align Action plan priorities with upcoming Budapest process ministerial declaration and action plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kick-off meeting of the EASTEAMS project took place on 26 September 2023, in Athens. Implementation continues.</li> <li>- On 24-25 January 2024 a two-day workshop was held by OSCE and the Hungarian Ministry of Interior, focusing on the victim-centred approach developed by the OSCE.</li> <li>- Second rounds of migration and mobility dialogues with Bangladesh and Pakistan, with technical meetings on readmission and Talent Partnership roundtables, was held in March and April 2024 respectively.</li> <li>- Pakistan reacted very positively to the call to action on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and was represented (as the only country from Asia) at Foreign Minister level at the conference in Brussels on 28 November 2023. It organised (together with UNODC and with the participation of the EU) a follow-up regional gathering of countries of origin, transit and</li> </ul>

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				<p>destination on 26-27 April 2024 in Islamabad, within the PROTECT programme, to support cooperation along migratory routes on countering migrant smuggling.</p> <p>- The NDICI-funded contract on “Promoting Action and Cooperation among countries at global level against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Smuggling of Migrants (PACTS)” was signed by UNODC on 15 July 2024.</p>
<b>2. Implement the measures of the toolbox on transport operators</b>	Commission, MS, Frontex, Eurocontrol	Ongoing	<p>- Explore the possibility to post liaison officers at key airports along the route to strengthen operational cooperation and to facilitate exchange of information with airlines and competent national authorities.</p> <p>- [REDACTED]</p>	<p>- Toolbox presented by the Commission on 6 June 2023.</p> <p>- The toolbox has been activated with discussions with partner countries, in particular [REDACTED]</p> <p>- [REDACTED]</p>
<b>3. Resume and conclude negotiations on the proposal for a Regulation on measures against transport operators</b>	Council, EP, Commission	Ongoing	<p>- Continue negotiations in the relevant Council’s working parties and Parliament’s committees.</p>	<p>- No change, last meeting of the RELEX Working Party took place in April 2023.</p>



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4. Continue cooperation with Türkiye to counter migrant smuggling	Commission, Europol, EUROJUST	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the implementation of Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy, the operationalization of the National Coordination and Risk Assessment Centre (NACORAC), and the enhancement of passenger screening at airports.</li> <li>- Reinforce Türkiye's participation in regional initiatives and projects targeting the Silk Route countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High Level Dialogue between the EU and Türkiye on migration and security took place in Brussels on 23 November 2023 and discussed the need to step up the fight against migrant smuggling. Commission to propose senior level meeting follow-up in Q3 2024 following April 2024 EUCO Conclusions and Coreper discussions on EU-Türkiye relations.</li> <li>- Last Budapest Process reference group and Senior Officials meetings, chaired by TR and HU, took place on 26-27 June, focused on the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration and Call for Action which, i.a. include references to fight against migrant smuggling and the joint work in the framework of Global Alliance.</li> <li>- The grant agreement of SCOPE II (EUR 5 million through the Internal Security Fund) has been signed. Kick-off meeting with DE, HU and AT and Turkish authorities took place on 5-7 December 2023 in Vienna and implementation continues.</li> <li>- </li> </ul>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support to two border management projects, one to develop Türkiye's Integrated Border Management (IBM) Strategy (EUR 2 million) and the other to support the operationalisation of the newly created National Coordination and Risk Assessment Centre (NACORAC) (EUR 1.2 million).</li> <li>- Airport security project focusing on passenger screening currently under implementation by IOM.</li> <li>- Türkiye informed of its intention to join the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) for the Operational Action Plan (OAP) on migrant smuggling on 30 January 2024 and participates in 3 Operational Actions of OAP Migrant Smuggling 2024-2025.</li> <li>- The EU is following up on EUCO 17/4 and Coreper 29/5 guidance on the Joint Communication's recommendations with Türkiye, including working towards a new round of High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Security.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Continue support for the establishment of the International</b>	Commission	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation started on 1 April 2024.</li> <li>- The Centre to be financed under AMIF MPF (implemented by ICMPD).</li> </ul>



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<b>Migration Cooperation Centre in Istanbul</b>				
<b>6. Enhance cooperation between EUROPOL, Frontex and EUROJUST, and build synergies between the EMPACT OAP on migrant smuggling and SCOPE II and EASTEAMS projects</b>	Commission, Europol, Frontex, and EUROJUST	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase participation and information sharing of all relevant partners in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) 2022-2025 policy cycle and its operational action plans (OAPs).</li> <li>- Build synergies between the EMPACT OAP and SCOPE II and EASTEAMS projects.</li> <li>- Continue to support regional cooperation among countries both on judicial and law enforcement aspects using EUROJUST and EUROPOL's expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Synergies between EMPACT OAP and SCOPE II and EASTEAMS project continue to be explored.</li> <li>- Frontex will continue its role as Co-Driver of the Migrant Smuggling OAP during 2024/25. Frontex leads 4 Operational Actions, co-leads 5, and participates in a further 13.</li> <li>- Türkiye has announced its participation in 3 of the Operational Actions.</li> <li>- In 2023 Frontex coordinated 7 Joint Action Days (JAD) all with a Migrant Smuggling focus leading to 375 migrant smugglers arrested and 485 false documents seized.</li> <li>- EUROJUST co-leads 10 Operational Actions of OAP Migrant Smuggling 2024-2025 and participates to additional 8.</li> <li>- EUROPOL will continue its role as co-driver of the Migrant Smuggling OAP 2024-2025. EUROPOL leads 4 Operational Actions, co-leads 9, and participates in a further 10.</li> <li>- Europol participated in all JADs taking place in 2023, and deployed staff at the coordination centre of JAD Danube.</li> </ul>

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7. Provide support to targeted information and awareness raising campaigns on the risks of irregular migration to the EU	EU DEL, MS	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene the European Migration Network (EMN) Information and Awareness Raising Campaigns Working Group to identify actions supporting knowledge exchange and coordination between Member States and EU bodies.</li> <li>- Continue the implementation of PARIM II (targeting Pakistan) and MIRAMI (targeting Iraq) under AMIF.</li> <li>- Continue the implementation of PATHWAYS (targeting EMR-WBR) under AMIF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EMN Info Working Group workshop with a geographical focus on the Eastern Mediterranean Route took place on 7 December 2023.</li> <li>- On 14 and 15 May, the conference of EMN Georgia and EMN Cyprus on "Information Campaigns as an Important Tool in Contemporary Migration Management" and the 13th Workshop of the EMN Info Working Group on "Information and awareness-raising campaigns to prevent and offer alternatives to the risks of irregular migration and migrant smuggling, as part of the Call to Action on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling" took place. The next EMN Info Working Group will take place in Q4 2024.</li> <li>- BG is a donor and partner with EL, DE, FI, AT in the implementation of ICMPD led projects - PARIM II (total budget: EUR 1.1 million) and MIRAMI</li> </ul> <p>Consortium Agreements were signed in August 2023. On 21 October 2023, the first Project Steering Group meeting was held virtually. The second joint Project Steering Group Meeting for projects PARIM-II and MIRAMI was held on 30 April 2024.</p>



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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AT is a co-donor and partner together with DE and the Italian NGO META in the implementation of the SEEFAR led project PATHWAYS EMR-WBR - Eastern Mediterranean Route – Western Balkan (duration April 1st, 2023 – March 31st, 2025). Online and social media interventions in Dari, Pashto, Kurdish, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi and Bengali languages. The fourth Steering Board and AMIF Meeting was held on 4 April 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>8. Continue offering safe and legal avenues to protection, including resettlement</b>	Commission, EUAA,	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sustained efforts for the resettlement of refugees in need of international protection.</li> <li>- Under the 2024-2025 EU resettlement and humanitarian admission scheme, 14 Member States collectively provided 61,000 pledges. (resettlement and humanitarian admission combined). The Syria situation (Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan) continues to be a key geographic priority for the current scheme.</li> <li>- Continue to support Member States and associated countries' efforts on resettlement and humanitarian admission through the operational assistance of the EUAA Resettlement Support Facility (RSF) in Istanbul.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breakdown of 2024-2025 EU Resettlement and humanitarian admission pledges is publicly available<sup>1</sup>. Implementation is ongoing.</li> <li>- The Commission is working with the Member States towards the roll-out of the new Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation.</li> <li>- The EUAA Resettlement Support Facility (RSF) is committed to providing ongoing support to EU+ countries for resettlement processing out of Türkiye, ensuring readiness to meet both current and future needs. In 2023, the EUAA RSF supported Italy, Romania, Finland, Belgium, France, Norway, Portugal,</li> </ul>



<sup>1</sup> [Resettlement pledges submitted by Member States for 2024-2025 en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)



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				<p>Slovenia, and Bulgaria with a total of 24 missions, which included support for selection, information provision, medical checks, and departure activities. From January to April 2024, the EUAA RSF supported Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, the Netherlands, France, Finland, and Norway with a total of 15 finalized missions. Given the evolving resettlement criteria of EU+ countries in alignment with EU and global priorities worldwide, the EUAA is proactively investigating the possibility of extending similar services to other third countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Any such measure would need prior approval of the MB.</p>
<b>II.</b>				
<b>9. Continue efforts to create legal migration and mobility opportunities</b>	<b>Commission</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<p>Hold a technical meeting and a Roundtable with Egypt to advance on the operationalisation of the Talent Partnership.</p> <p>Sign and launch of the contracts under the NDICI-funded actions adopted in support of Talent Partnerships in Bangladesh and in Pakistan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On 15 November 2023, the Commission adopted a Skills and Talent Mobility package, including a proposal for a Regulation establishing an EU Talent Pool. Legislative negotiations are ongoing. It would be the first EU-wide matching platform between EU employers and non-EU citizens living outside the EU.</li> <li>- The high-level conference on legal migration organised by the EMN and the Spanish Presidency on 16 and 17</li> </ul>


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				<p>November 2023 brought together Member States, partner countries, notably Egypt, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. It was an opportunity for partner countries (who ensured a high-level participation) to reaffirm their commitment to Talent Partnerships, as part of a reinforced cooperation in migration management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After the Talent Partnership Roundtables, first follow-up technical meetings were organised with the Bangladeshi and the Pakistani authorities on 18 July and 10 October 2023 respectively. Talent Partnership Roundtable with Pakistan took place on 23 April 2024.</li> <li>- The Commission adopted the NDICI-funded actions in support of the Talent Partnerships in Bangladesh and in Pakistan on 23 November 2023.</li> <li>- The contract of the NDICI-action in Bangladesh was signed and launched on 8 July 2024 in Dhaka. The contract of the NDICI-action in Pakistan to be implemented by the German GIZ, is currently under negotiation and expected to be finalised by the end of summer 2024. An EU-Pakistan Joint-Commission, scheduled to take place in</li> </ul>



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				<p>November 2024 will give an opportunity to review migration related issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A technical meeting and the second Talent Partnership Roundtable with Egypt will be organised in the upcoming months (tbc).</li> <li>- A new Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) project to set up a mobility scheme (around 100 people) from Egypt to Italy was approved and will start being implemented in the coming months. This adds to actions supported by the NDICI-Global Europe programme with a wider scope: Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM)</li> </ul>
<b>10. Explore with MS the possibility to further streamline Schengen visa procedures and to facilitate processing of visa applications</b>	MS, Commission	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate the processing of visa applications in MS.</li> <li>- </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Element highlighted in the suggestions of the Commission / HRVP Joint Communication on EU-Türkiye relations of 29/11 and in the joint press release from the HLD in November 2023.</li> <li>- </li> <li>- In the context of the EU-TR High Level Dialogue on Trade on 8/7/2024, a</li> </ul>

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				fruitful session was dedicated to business mobility and options to smooth the visa process for businesspeople.
<b>11. Reinstate the temporary scheme of short-stay tourist visits from certain Turkish areas to Greece</b>	EL, Commission	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote people-to-people contacts between Greece and Türkiye.</li> <li>- Presentation of concept and information to Member States about next steps on implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following technical meetings and exchanges between the Commission and the relevant Greek authorities, Greece officially informed the Commission in December 2023 of its plan to reinstate the temporary scheme of short-stay tourist visits from certain Turkish coastal areas to 10 Greek islands in the eastern Aegean. The Commission welcomed this initiative noting the specific conditions set out for implementation and monitoring to prevent irregular overstays and secondary movements.</li> <li>- The implementation of the scheme started on 30 March 2024 for the first 5 islands (Chios, Lesbos, Kos, Rhodes, and Samos) and on 30 April for the remaining 5 islands (Kalymnos, Kastellorizo, Leros, Limnos, and Symi). COM has received the statistical data for the first 3 months (April-June) of implementation [REDACTED]. The Commission will continue to closely monitor implementation of the scheme.</li> </ul>





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<b>III. Strengthened border management</b>				
<b>12. Support border management capacities at Türkiye's borders</b>	Commission, Frontex	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effectively implement the EUR 220 million support to increase Border Surveillance Capacity at Türkiye's Eastern border with Iran.</li> <li>- Continue engagement with other countries as relevant, notably, in the framework of ongoing border management projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contract on surveillance capacity at Türkiye's Eastern border with Iran has been signed.</li> <li>- </li> <li>- BMVI project supporting Türkiye's border management at its western borders started implementation on 1 July 2024.</li> <li>- Element highlighted in the suggestions of the Commission / HRVP Joint Communication on EU-Türkiye relations of 29/11.</li> </ul>
<b>13. Reinforce and improve border management and control at EU external land and sea borders, by making efficient use of pre-arrival information, efficient border checks procedures and registrations, adequate</b>	Frontex, MS	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make efficient use of pre-arrival information, efficient border checks procedures and registrations, adequate infrastructure and equipment, in full respect of Union and international law.</li> <li>- EU to explore with Pakistan an opportunity to negotiate an Administrative Agreement foreseeing the possibility to strengthening the cooperation between EUROPOL and Pakistan also to address the issue of smuggling of human beings.</li> <li>- Starting in 2024, the new set-up of the Frontex Standing Corps with a new command structure is being implemented in the Member States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frontex, Commission, EEAS and EUDEL proceeding with the deployment of a Frontex Liaison Officer in Islamabad following the approval by Pakistani MFA in April 2024.</li> <li>- LEBANON: "Strengthening Capability for Integrated Border Management in Lebanon (EU IBM Lebanon – phase 3)" (EUR 7 million, with ICMPD) programme ongoing to enhance border governance, contribute to the security and stability of border communities and reinforce rights-based approach and</li> </ul>

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infrastructure and equipment.			Implementation will continue into 2025. Decentralised command with more decision powers in the field will allow for more flexibility and increase the capacity both in the field and in Frontex HQs. In long term, this will allow for more efficient and effective use of resources in support of the Member States in the Mediterranean as well as other regions.	<p>IBM coordination contributing to enhanced border security and trade facilitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LEBANON: programming for 2024 on IBM, anti-smuggling and trafficking presented at NDICI Committee on 17/07, following up on President of the Commission announcement on 2 May.</li> <li>- JORDAN: Support to Integrated Border Management in Jordan (EUR 11 million 2019 to 2024) with UNODC/ICMPD. Main aim is the development of Jordan's capacity to control and manage its borders while guaranteeing the respect for the rule of law and human rights standards.</li> <li>- The action "Integrated Border Management in the Silk Route countries" (EUR 12 million, implemented by ICMPD, ending December 2024), currently being implemented in Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan. Steering Committee met on 15 November 2023. Activities focus on the human and institutional capacity development of the country's law enforcement agencies (Bangladesh), strengthen capacities of the governments vis-à-vis border management capacities and systems (Iraq, Pakistan).</li> </ul>



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				- [REDACTED]
<b>14. Continue to support regional cooperation among partners in the Southern neighbourhood</b>	Commission, EEAS, EU DEL, Frontex	Ongoing	- Promote cooperation among partners in the Southern neighbourhood, notably Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frontex is implementing EU4BorderSecurity project (ENI, EUR 6.5 million) currently ongoing until April 2025.</li> <li>- CEPOL has, with the support of Europol, implemented the EUROMED Police project, aimed at enhancing the capacity of the EU Southern Partner Countries to fight, in particular, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, cybercrime, drug trafficking, and financial crimes and money-laundering ( April 2020 – September 2024).</li> </ul>
<b>15. Provide assistance to Greece in establishing the NIMSS, to Cyprus in making operational the new National Coordination Centre and to update the coastal surveillance</b>	Commission, EL, CY and BG	Ongoing	- Support the implementation of the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) in each of those countries paying particular attention to the achievement of the goals mentioned. The Commission prioritises swift implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approximately EUR 3.5 million have been granted to BG for the update and maintenance of the coastal surveillance system (2023-2025). Public procurement procedure has been initiated.</li> <li>- A Specific Actions call for expression of interest under BMVI related to sea border surveillance for Member States with external maritime borders was launched at the beginning of May for</li> </ul>

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system, and to Bulgaria to update the coastal surveillance system				<p>submission of proposals by 7 June. This call will support Member States most affected by sea arrivals of irregular migrants.</p> 
16. Foster the reinvigoration of cooperation between Frontex and Türkiye	Frontex			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NACORAC project, currently being implemented by ICMPD with Frontex in the steering committee.</li> <li>- Representatives of NACORAC visited Frontex HQ on 29-31 January 2024. TR side demonstrated interest in joint activities with Frontex.</li> <li>- Frontex delegation headed by the HoU ICU visited Ankara on 13-16 May where they met with the newly appointed Director General for Border Management and NACORAC. Frontex extended an invitation to DG to visit Warsaw, exchanged best practices with NACORAC on risk analysis and discussed avenues for further cooperation.</li> </ul>



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<b>17. Improve situational awareness at the sea borders in cooperation with Frontex and ensure that assistance to persons found in distress at sea is swiftly provided</b>	Frontex, Commission, MS	Ongoing	<div></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance cooperation by collecting and exchanging information, using EUROSUR.</li> <li>- Provide assistance to improve the external border control, and maritime search and rescue, e.g. via the BMVI funded European Multinational Mission Surveillance Project (EMMOS).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Last Search and Rescue Contact Group meeting took place in April 2024.</li> <li>- Exchange of information using EUROSUR would require a new Working Arrangement between Frontex and the country concerned. For EU Member States, this exchange would require a bilateral or multilateral agreement (between a given MS and a third country).</li> <li>- BMVI funding can be taken into consideration for search and rescue operations in situations which might arise during border surveillance operations at sea but cannot provide financial support for search and rescue as such, which is a MS competence.</li> </ul>
<b>IV. Enhance return and readmission cooperation</b>				
<b>18. Promote full and effective implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and the EU-Turkey readmission agreement</b>	Commission, EEAS, Council	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold regular meetings of the Joint Readmission Committee.</li> <li>- EU-Türkiye High Level Dialogue on Migration and Security, 23/11/2023</li> </ul> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Point particularly highlighted in the suggestions of the Commission / HRVP Joint Communication on EU-Türkiye relations of 29 November 2023.</li> </ul> <div></div>

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<b>19. Strengthen national operational and infrastructural capacities to step up returns from the EU</b>	Commission, Frontex, MS, EUDEL	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further support the development and implementation of national IT return case management systems based on the RECAMAS model.</li> <li>- Further support and development of standing corps deployments (FRESO and Return Specialists) in Eastern Mediterranean region.</li> <li>- Delivery of return-related trainings (for national escorts and monitors, as well as on the use of FAR: Frontex-Assisted Returns), and on return and reintegration counselling.</li> <li>- Encourage engagement with international stakeholders like IOM in order to enhance cooperation on returns and readmission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- e-RCMS (Return Case Management System) to be developed in Türkiye and in priority third countries for Türkiye under EMPATHY project with IOM (EUR 5 million). Implementation of the project started 1 May 2024 (duration 36 months).</li> <li>- CY is in the process of developing its RECAMAS (with Frontex support) and is benefiting from Forced Return Escort and Support Officer (FRESO)/ Return specialists' deployments and trainings.</li> <li>- Frontex supported CY with several identification missions that were followed up with issuance of travel documents and returns.</li> <li>- Deployments of FRESO in Greece is under discussion. The number of Return Specialists deployed to Greece has increased to a total of 8 deployments supporting the implementation of the EU Reintegration Programme (EURP)</li> <li>- Greece is in the process of launching the call for development and implementation of an IT return case management system based on Frontex RECAMAS model.</li> <li>- Greece has joined in May 2024, Frontex EU Reintegration Programme (EURP – former JRS) programme</li> </ul>



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<b>20. Support the use to the maximum extent of the Action Plans on returns agreed between Frontex and Cyprus, Greece and Bulgaria</b>	Frontex, CY, EL, BG		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to provide expertise and operational support to Cyprus, Greece and Bulgaria for using to the maximum extent the support available under the Action Plans</li> <li>- Sustain cooperation between Frontex, the Commission and MS within the framework of the dedicated Working Groups on Returns and continue building sufficient, future-proof capacities.</li> </ul>	<p>The Action Plan between Frontex and Bulgaria (signed June 2023), Greece (signed March 2023) and Cyprus (signed March 2022) on cooperation in the field of return are being implemented and so far resulted in a significant increase in return and reintegration counselling, a gap analysis for the better alignment of the national systems with Frontex RECAMAS model for the digitalization of the return procedures, the onboarding of the Hellenic Police (Ministry of Citizens Protection) and Ministry of Migration and Asylum to the EURP (May 2024). Increase in the number of returns from CY supported by FRESO (e.g. in the past years CY has become one of the top Member States in voluntary-based returns by scheduled flights carried out with Frontex support).</p> <p>Number of returns has increased in BG, notably by making use of Frontex EURP programme</p>
<b>21. Under the Bulgaria pilot project, enhance returns through, <i>inter alia</i>, the deployment of return specialists and interpreters</b>	Frontex, Commission, BG	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue working via the framework established under the Bulgaria pilot project in order to improve returns.</li> <li>- Support Bulgaria's engagement with third countries on non-voluntary returns, while considering a tailor-made Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme.</li> </ul>	<p>The implementation of the Pilot project in Bulgaria resulted so far in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- proposed amendments to the national legislation in order to accelerate the implementation of asylum and return procedures;</li> <li>- deployment of 2 return specialists and 2 interpreters with the support of</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following the progress on the pilot project for Bulgaria, as reported by the Commission on 18 October 2023, the Commission, Bulgaria and the EU Agencies to continue working closely in this framework, including by identifying potential new areas of cooperation.</li> </ul>	<p>Frontex to support return and reintegration counselling. 2074 counselling sessions by 30/06/2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Onboarding of Bulgaria to the EURP.</li> <li>- return and reintegration counselling training held in September 2023, followed by a series of national training sessions;</li> <li>- preparation to launch a new assisted voluntary return programme as of early 2024, to be supported under the 2021-2027 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), aiming at increasing return incentives and reintegration assistance to beneficiaries. (agreement to be signed in coming weeks).</li> <li>- The tripartite (BG, COM, Frontex) Working Group Returns Bulgaria has meetings on a monthly basis.</li> <li>- In line with agreement on full application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria, the Commission and the EU Agencies established new Cooperation Frameworks building on the success of the pilot projects.</li> <li>- RECAMAS gap analysis with BG completed in 2023 on national return case management system.</li> </ul>



Action	Lead actor(s)	Status	Way ahead incl. timeline	Comments
<b>22. Coordinate joint diplomatic outreach vis-à-vis third countries of origin and transit, in particular in South Asia and in Africa</b>	Commission, EEAS, MS, EUDEL	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take concrete steps to improve readmission, - in the framework of the existing EU readmission agreements and arrangements, and of Article 25a of the Visa Code.</li> <li>- Raise readmission issues with third countries' governments in a coordinated manner.</li> <li>- Regularly assess the performance on readmission and returns with 3rd countries along the migratory route.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5th Article 25a report in preparation, foreseen to be adopted by end of July 2024.</li> <li>- Ongoing continuous outreach on readmission with relevant countries.</li> </ul>
<b>23. Support sustainable reintegration in the countries of origin</b>	MS, Commission, Frontex, EUDEL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take specific measures to address the social, psychological and professional reintegration of returnees in the origin countries and coordinate support accordingly, including with EUMS.</li> <li>- Promote a consistent usage of the EU Reintegration Programme (EURP) in the Member States around the Eastern Med. This may also include the participation of these MS in return and reintegration counselling activities supported by Frontex, such as deployment of Return Specialists, or participation in training activities.</li> <li>- Take concrete steps to further enhance and support the capabilities of the relevant national entities within the Eastern Med region, thereby ensuring the development of a well-coordinated and strong functioning national return &amp; reintegration referral mechanism, in order to create sustainable reintegration for returnees in their countries of origin. Frontex will provide continued support to Egypt in building the national return and reintegration mechanism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the implementation of the NDICI-funded PROTTASHA II in Bangladesh (EUR 20 million).</li> <li>- The NDICI-funded action (EUR 7 million) on Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees and Improved Migration Management in Pakistan was adopted in November 2023. Contract under preparation.</li> <li>- The EURP is active in Eastern Mediterranean area in Türkiye and Egypt. EUMS are actively using the programme. Since 1 May 2024, the Greek Ministry of Migration, together with IOM and Frontex have concluded working procedures to refer returnees from IOM to EURP.</li> <li>- Kick off a NDICI-funded action on "Social and Economic Reintegration, and Improved Migration Governance in Iraq".</li> </ul>



Action	Lead actor(s)	Status	Way ahead incl. timeline	Comments
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frontex organized together with the Egyptian authorities (within TAP4RRR) a Best Practices Workshop on Return &amp; Reintegration for Egypt which took place in November 2023.</li> <li>- A study visit from Egypt to the Armenian State Migration Services took place in May 2024, to facilitate Egyptian authorities' development of their national return and reintegration mechanism. Frontex aims to organize in 2024 follow-up actions related to return and reintegration counselling.</li> </ul>
<b>V. Ensure efficient migration management, improve asylum procedures and support sufficient reception capacity</b>				
<b>29. Continue cooperation with Türkiye on strengthening its asylum and reception systems</b>	Commission, EUAA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperate with Türkiye in line with the Common European Asylum System and EU standards, and through the Roadmap for Cooperation between the EUAA and Türkiye's Presidency of Migration Management.</li> <li>- Maintain EU support in improving asylum procedures.</li> <li>- Maintain operational grants to the Presidency for Migration Management (PMM) for the management of removal centres.</li> </ul>	<p>The EUAA-TR Roadmap delivered a total of 22 activities on asylum and reception under a 15-month [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] These included support on country-of-origin information, access to EUAA training modules, persons with special needs, and correctly establishing the identity of applicants. EMPATHY (project EUR 12,5 million) under AMIF on support to Turkish AVRR strategy and developing alternatives to detention.</p>



Action	Lead actor(s)	Status	Way ahead incl. timeline	Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask EUAA to provide regular updates on the status of cooperation with entities, institution and government bodies dealing with asylum procedures, such as the Presidency for Migration Management of Türkiye.</li> </ul>	<p>Discussions between the EUAA and the PMM on a fifth generation Roadmap are underway and key thematic areas have been identified. Until the 2024-2026 Roadmap is adopted, the EUAA is providing bridging activities to ensure uninterrupted support to the PMM.</p> 