




Relocation and Resettlement: Increased efforts on resettlement and relocation must be sustained

Brussels, 15 June 2016

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 [Migration 2015: Resettlement](#)

Today, the Commission adopted its latest progress report on the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes, assessing actions taken over the past month. Since the last report, Member States have significantly increased their efforts on resettlement as part of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. The number of relocations has increased to 2,280, with the rate having almost doubled since the Commission's third report on 18 May. Despite these positive signs, progress is still too slow. Action must be accelerated to avoid migrants returning to irregular routes.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"As numbers of arrivals in Greece have gone down, the absolute onus now lies on significantly increasing and speeding up relocations. But we also cannot forget Italy, where the seasonal increase of arrivals is happening. This is a humanitarian obligation. At the same time, I commend the efforts made by Member States over the past months to resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey. Our progress in genuinely breaking the smugglers' business model will only be sustainable if a safe and legal channel is really open for asylum seekers."*

Resettlement

The number of resettlements from Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement has continued to increase and is expected to be even further strengthened in the coming months as Member States finalise their assessments of files referred to them by Turkey, via the UNHCR. Since 4 April 2016, 511 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey to the EU, including 330 since the last report, and the number of Member States actively participating in the scheme has increased. Since the last progress report, in addition to Finland, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden, resettlements have now also taken place to Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal.

Based on the information received from the participating States, 7,272 persons had been resettled by 10 June 2016 under the resettlement scheme of 20 July 2015, mainly from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. These people were received by 19 resettling States (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

Relocation

During the reporting period, 13 May to 14 June, the number of relocations increased and 780 additional persons were relocated, almost double the rate compared to the previous period. This brings the total number of persons relocated by 14 June to 2,280 (1,503 from Greece and 777 from Italy). Although this constitutes progress, it still falls far short of the Commission's proposed target of relocating 6,000 people per month. Member States are far from complying with their commitment under the Council Decisions on relocation. The current monthly average of relocations from Greece is around 260-300 people. Moreover, the increase in relocations is largely due to greater efforts on the part of the Member States which were already the most active in the relocation scheme.

The number of relocation transfers and pledges in **Italy** remains particularly low in view of the increasing number of potential applicants for relocation arriving in Italy.

In **Greece**, around 49,000 asylum seekers and migrants are present in official temporary reception facilities on the mainland, waiting for registration and processing. With the financial support of the Commission and support on the ground from the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Greek asylum service launched a major pre-registration exercise on 8 June with the aim to pre-register 1,400 persons per day to accelerate the identification and full processing of relocation applicants. A significant number of additional asylum seekers will be ready for relocation within the following months – it is expected that between 60 and 65% of people pre-registered belong to one of the nationalities eligible for relocation.

In today's report, the Commission acknowledges the efforts made by some Member States and urges all to put in place effective planning to increase pledges and relocation transfers in the coming six months. Reducing the response time on relocation requests is also a key element to successfully implement the relocation scheme. The security checks continue to lead to a significant slowdown of the response time, sometimes going beyond the two-month time-limit set out in the Council decision. The Commission also calls for all actors to step up the relocation of vulnerable persons, in particular unaccompanied minors.

Background

The temporary emergency relocation scheme was established in two Council Decisions in September 2015 in which Member States committed to relocate 160,000 people from Italy and Greece (and if relevant from other Member States) by September 2017.

On 8 June 2015, the Commission adopted a proposal on a European Resettlement Scheme, which was followed by an agreement among the Member States on 20 July 2015 to resettle 22,504 persons in clear need of international protection, in line with the figures put forward by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Following the EU Leaders' Summit with Turkey on 29 November 2015, the [EU-Turkey Action Plan](#) was adopted. The voluntary admission scheme proposed by the Commission on 15 December 2015 is a key element of the Plan, aimed at supporting Turkey in managing refugees and offering a safe and legal channel for persons in need of protection.

The [European Council on 7 March](#) called for an acceleration of the implementation of relocation, in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Greece. Today's report responds to the Council's Conclusions, and to the Commission's commitment under the ["Back to Schengen"](#) Roadmap.

The EU Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 provides that for every Syrian being returned from Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU. This principle applies as of 4 April 2016. Priority is given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly.

Following the EU-Turkey Statement, the Commission on 21 March, adopted a [proposal](#) to make 54,000 places not yet allocated out of the of the 160,000 places foreseen for relocations available for the purpose of resettling Syrians from Turkey to the EU.

The Commission adopted on [16 March](#) the First Report on Relocation and Resettlement. The Second and Third Report were adopted respectively on [12 April](#) and [18 May](#).

For More Information

[Communication from the Commission: Fourth Report on Relocation and Resettlement](#)

[Annex: Relocations from Greece by 14 June](#)

[Annex: Relocations from Italy by 14 June](#)

[Annex: Resettlement State of Play as of 10 June](#)

[FACTSHEET – Relocation and Resettlement – State of Play](#)

[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](#)

Press release: [A Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey for refugees from Syria](#)

[Commission Recommendation for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme for Refugees from Syria staying in Turkey](#)

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

[Proposal for a Council Decision amending Council Decision \(EU\) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece](#)

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