



## Commission adopts second Recommendation identifying steps to restore Dublin transfers to Greece

Brussels, 15 June 2016

**The Commission has today adopted its second Recommendation on the specific measures that Greece needs to take to fully implement the EU asylum standards to better manage the refugee crisis.**

Today the Commission adopted its second Recommendation on the specific measures that Greece needs to take to fully implement the EU asylum standards to better manage the refugee crisis and to possibly resume transfers of asylum seekers from other Member States under the Dublin Regulation. The Recommendation notes that despite the difficult situation Greece is confronted with, it has made continuous efforts in improving its asylum system since the first recommendation adopted in February, including increasing the overall reception capacity as well as the capacity of the asylum service, setting-up a framework for free legal aid and new appeal authorities. However, there is still a significant amount of progress to be achieved before Dublin transfers to Greece can be resumed by the end-of-year objective.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"While the challenges and pressure of the migration crisis have continued in recent months, Greece has achieved undeniable progress in improving its asylum system and providing better conditions for migrants and refugees. The Commission, together with the other Member States, will continue to support Greece to adequately manage the high number of asylum seekers present in Greece so that it will be in a position to gradually return to the Dublin system."*

It is for Member States' authorities, under the control of their courts and the European courts, to decide whether they consider that the conditions are adequate to resume Dublin transfers to Greece. The Commission's recommendation is a roadmap that sets out the steps to be taken by Greece to have a well-functioning asylum system and be fully part of the European Dublin system.

Today's Recommendation finds that since the adoption of the [first Recommendation](#), there have been continuous efforts by the Greek authorities, assisted by the Commission, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Member States and international organisations to improve the functioning of the asylum system, in line with the concerns identified.

With the financial support of the Commission, Greece has significantly increased its overall reception capacity for both irregular migrants and applicants for international protection, and has progressed on the establishment of Regional Asylum Offices as well as the recruitment of more staff for the Asylum Service to increase its processing capacity. The Greek Asylum Service now has double the human resources that were available in 2015 to increase its capacity and significant progress has been made on the long-standing backlog of asylum cases.

At the same time, the current refugee and migration crisis has placed enormous pressure on the Greek asylum and migration system as the main country of first entry on the Eastern Mediterranean route. While the entry into force of the [EU-Turkey Statement](#) has seen a significant decrease in the number of daily arrivals, it has also placed new responsibilities on Greece.

The Recommendation adopted today sets out the concrete steps that Greece must take to get back into the Dublin system, focusing as a matter of priority on:

- establishing appropriate permanent and temporary **open reception facilities** and ensuring that all these facilities offer adequate reception conditions, including by ensuring minors have access to education;
- allowing effective **access to the asylum procedure**, including by ensuring that the Greek asylum service is adequately staffed and organised;
- instituting the new Appeals Authority without delay and ensuring that it is adequately staffed to deal with all pending and future appeals;
- ensuring access to **free legal aid** is effective in practice;

- establishing structures for vulnerable applicants, including **unaccompanied minors**, including by urgently putting in place a suitable guardianship procedure.

The Recommendation asks Greece to report by the end of June, and then on a monthly basis thereafter, to show where progress has been achieved and what actions the Greek authorities are taking to remedy the insufficiencies within their asylum system. The Commission will report on the progress made by the Greek authorities in September and update as appropriate its specific recommendations. Ultimately, the objective is to have Greece back in the Dublin system and to resume transfers by the end of December at the latest, in line with the [Back to Schengen Roadmap](#).

## **Background**

For the Common European Asylum System to work there must be a real possibility to return asylum seekers to the country of first entry to the EU, as foreseen by the commonly agreed EU rules. Since 2011, Member States have not been able to carry out Dublin transfers to Greece following two judgements of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) which identified systemic deficiencies in the Greek asylum system.

On 10 February, the Commission adopted a [Recommendation](#) addressed to Greece on the urgent measures to be taken in view of the possible resumption of some transfers under the Dublin Regulation. Since the ECJ judgement in 2011, Greece has made some improvements and has taken action to remedy the shortcomings in its asylum system, closely monitored by the Commission, European Asylum Support Office and Member States.

The European Commission has provided substantial funding to Greece to support the country in its efforts to bring its asylum management system up to EU standards.

Since the beginning of 2015 a total of €262 million in emergency assistance has been awarded through Home Affairs Funds (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Internal Security Fund (ISF)) to Greece, either directly to the Greek authorities or through Union Agencies and international organisations operating in Greece, for measures notably aiming to increase the capacities of the Greek authorities to register migrants and to process their asylum claims, create better conditions for vulnerable migrants, strengthen the registration and asylum process with additional human resources, ensure better IT infrastructure and increase availability of interpreters and ensure better access to information.

This emergency assistance comes on top of the €509 million allocated to Greece for the period 2014-2020 through its national programmes under the AMIF and ISF Funds, thus making Greece the first beneficiary of EU Home Affairs funds amongst EU Member States.

## **For more information**

[Second recommendation on urgent measures to be taken by Greece in view of the resumption of transfers under the Dublin Regulation](#)

[FACTSHEET: Managing the refugee crisis: EU financial support to Greece](#)

Press release: [Back to Schengen: Commission proposes Roadmap for restoring fully functioning Schengen system](#)

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