



Managing the Refugee Crisis: Stepping up return procedures to Turkey

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Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: *"Under the EU-Turkey joint action plan we agreed to accelerate return and readmission procedures with Turkey. The European Commission has reinforced its support for cooperation on return between EU Member States and Turkey and today's transfers of returnees from Greece to Turkey show that our efforts are starting to bear fruit. If we want to address the challenges of the refugee crisis successfully we need to get back to an orderly management of the migration flows: We have to make sure that those who are in need of protection will receive it, but it has to be clear as well that those who have no right to stay in the EU will be quickly and effectively returned."*

For the Common European Asylum System to work, a fully functioning return policy is crucial. The return of irregular migrants who have no right to stay in the EU to their home countries or to countries they transited through, in full respect of fundamental rights and the principle of non-refoulement, is an essential part of the EU's comprehensive efforts to address migration and in particular to reduce irregular migration.

It is for this reason that stepping up the cooperation on returns with Turkey is one of the key priorities of the European Commission. Under the [Joint EU-Turkey Action Plan](#), activated on 29 November, the EU and Turkey have committed to reinforcing cooperation on migration management, including through the prevention of irregular migration flows to the EU, and to accelerating readmission procedures for irregular migrants, in line with the established readmission provisions.

The Commission has been working with the Greek and Turkish authorities to improve the implementation of the bilateral readmission agreement between Greece and Turkey and to facilitate returns of irregular migrants. Yesterday and today, the return of 308 irregular migrants, mainly of Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian origin, is taking place from Greece to Turkey. This sends a clear signal that those who do not qualify for international protection will be returned.

Background

An effective common EU return policy is one of the priorities under the [European Agenda on Migration](#). The Commission has presented an [EU Action Plan on Return](#) which defines the immediate and mid-term measures to be taken by Member States to enhance voluntary return, to strengthen the implementation of the Return Directive, to improve information sharing, to strengthen the role and mandate of the EU's border agency, Frontex, in return operations, and to create an integrated system of return management.

The provisions of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement entered into force on 1 October 2014, with the objective to establish, on the basis of reciprocity, procedures for the rapid and orderly readmission, by each side, of the persons having entered or are residing on the territory of the other side in an irregular manner.

The entry into force of the provisions related to third country nationals will be advanced following an agreement between the EU and Turkey and are expected to enter into force as of 1 June 2016.

For more information

[EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan](#)

[European Agenda on Migration](#)

[All press materials on the EU Migration Agenda](#)

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