



Relocation and Resettlement: Steady progress made but more efforts needed to meet targets

Brussels, 12 April 2017

Today, the Commission adopted its eleventh progress report on the EU's emergency relocation and resettlement schemes, assessing actions taken since 2 March 2017.

Member States have made steady progress on relocation, setting a new monthly record with an additional 2,465 persons relocated. The total number of relocations now stands at 16,340. However, more efforts are needed from all Member States to ensure that all people eligible are relocated over the coming months. On resettlement, Member States have continued to make significant progress, with safe and legal pathways being provided to 15,492 persons so far. To help improve the relocation and the resettlement process, today's report includes targeted recommendations for Member States.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"In March, we reached a new record number of people relocated. This is solidarity in action and a demonstration of responsibility. Now is the time for our Member States to deliver on their commitments and to intensify their efforts. They have a political, moral and legal duty to do so. I call on those countries that have not yet joined this common effort to do so. Relocating all people eligible from Greece and Italy over the coming months is perfectly feasible. At the same time, we managed to resettle over two thirds of the 22,500 people we committed to offer a safe and legal path to in July 2015. This is welcome news. We are delivering on our commitments to share responsibility with third-countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon."*

Relocation

The pace of relocations has continued to increase, resulting in a 27% improvement on the best previous month – with more than 1,600 from Greece and more than 800 from Italy, March saw a total of, 2,465 persons relocated. As of 10 April, 16,340 relocations have now been carried out in total; 5,001 from Italy and 11,339 from Greece. However, despite this positive progress, the current pace of relocation is still well below the targets set to ensure that all people eligible are relocated over the coming months.

With around 14,000 relocation candidates remaining in Greece and around 3,500 registered for relocation so far in Italy, the total number of people eligible for relocation who are present in the two countries is well below what was foreseen in the Council Decisions. Given these figures, if the European Council-endorsed targets of at least 3,000 monthly relocations from Greece and the target set by the Commission of at least 1,500 monthly relocations from Italy are met, relocating all eligible applicants currently present in Greece and Italy by September 2017 is perfectly achievable. With the preconditions and operational infrastructure for relocation to work being fully in place in both countries, and the EU agencies and international organisations having increased their capacities to meet the targets set, it is now up to the Member States to demonstrate political will and intensify and coordinate their efforts to deliver on their obligations.

With the aim of removing the remaining operational and logistical bottlenecks in the relocation procedure, today's report includes targeted recommendations for specific Member States on how to improve the process all the way from making the pledge until the transfer takes place.

To improve the relocation procedure, Member States should notably:

- Pledge on a monthly basis, increase the overall numbers pledged, increase their capacity to process relocation requests and reduce the response time;
- Avoid overly restrictive preferences and delays and limit requirements causing delays in the transfer procedure;
- Show more flexibility regarding the possibility, in the case of Italy, and, in the case of relocating Member States, the necessity to conduct additional security interviews;
- Give priority to applications concerning vulnerable people, in particular unaccompanied minors;
- In addition, in the case of Italy, the registration and identification of all eligible candidates should

take place as soon as possible.

Whereas some Member States (Luxembourg and Portugal) are steadily progressing on their obligations for Greece and Italy, others (Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia) are relocating on a very limited basis. Whilst Austria has announced it will start relocating soon, others (Hungary and Poland) are still refusing to participate in the relocation scheme at all. So far, only two Member States (Malta and Finland) are on track to meet their obligations for both Italy and Greece in time.

The Commission therefore urges Member States to follow up its recommendations and targets to ensure an increased rate of relocations in a coordinated manner before the next report in May 2017. As stressed in the previous report, if Member States do not increase their relocations soon, the Commission will not hesitate to make use of its powers under the Treaties for those which have not complied with the Council decisions, noting that the legal obligation to relocate those eligible will not cease after September. The Commission stands ready to assist Member States in making progress towards meeting these obligations.

Resettlement

The resettlement scheme continues to be on track. With 15,492 persons resettled to 21 countries^[1] as of 10 April, more than two thirds of the agreed 22,504 resettlements under the EU resettlement scheme have already been carried out. Since 28 February 2017, 1,070 people have been resettled, mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon.

While some Member States and Associated Countries have already fulfilled their targets (Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) and several more having joined the ranks of resettling states through the EU scheme, the responsibilities are still unevenly distributed. Nine Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) have yet to start resettling within the ongoing EU-level schemes.

The pace of resettlements from Turkey, included in the overall figure of resettlement, has continued to accelerate over the past weeks with 1,053 Syrians resettled since the last report. A total of 4,618 Syrian refugees have so far been provided with safe and legal passage to Europe under the EU-Turkey Statement. Member States are advancing well on preparations for further resettlements and pledges now stand at 26,112, a significant increase compared to the last report. Indeed, Austria and Romania are currently preparing their first resettlements under the scheme. There are, however, Member States that have neither resettled nor undertaken any actions to resettle from Turkey (Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom).

Whilst significant progress has been achieved, Member States who are still far from reaching their targets and those Member States who have not yet resettled under the EU schemes should step up their efforts to resettle as soon as possible to contribute to the joint efforts to provide safe and legal pathways to the EU for persons in need of international protection and to implement the EU-Turkey Statement.

Background

The temporary emergency relocation scheme was established in two Council Decisions in September 2015, in which Member States committed to relocate persons in need of international protection from Italy and Greece. The relocation decisions concern the commitment to relocate 98,255 people, after the Council adopted an amendment to the 2nd Council Decision on relocation on 29 September 2016 to make 54,000 places not yet allocated available for the purpose of legally admitting Syrians from Turkey to the EU.

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.

The [European Council on 7 March](#) 2016 called for an acceleration of the implementation of relocation in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Greece. In its [conclusions of 20 and 21 October](#), the European Council reiterated its call for further action to accelerate the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes in light of the urgent need to provide support to Greece and Italy. The [European Council on 15 December](#) endorsed the Joint Action Plan on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, which included the relocation target for Greece of 3,000 monthly transfers and reiterated its call to further intensify efforts to accelerate relocation, in particular for unaccompanied minors, and existing resettlement schemes.

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.

The Commission on 13 July 2016 proposed a permanent [EU Resettlement Framework](#) to establish a common set of standard procedures for the selection of resettlement candidates and a common protection status for persons resettled to the EU to streamline and better focus European resettlement efforts in the future.

The Commission adopted on 2016 the First Report on Relocation and Resettlement. The Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Reports were adopted respectively on [12 April](#), [18 May](#), [15 June](#), [13 July](#), [28 September](#), [9 November](#), [8 December 2016](#) and [28 February](#) and [2 March 2017](#).

For More Information

[Communication: Eleventh Report on Relocation and Resettlement](#)

[Annex 1: Relocations from Greece](#)

[Annex 2: Relocations from Italy](#)

[Annex 3: Relocations from Italy and Greece](#)

[Annex 4: Resettlement State of Play](#)

[FACTSHEET: Relocation and Resettlement](#)

[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 Decision \(EU\) 2016/1754 of 29 September 2016 amending Decision \(EU\) 2015/1601 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece](#)

[Council Conclusions on Resettlement of 20,000 persons in need of international protection](#)

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

[1] Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

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