

Athens, 09/01/2018

## Press Release

### Successful Conclusion of the EU Relocation Scheme

21,726 asylum seekers, amongst them 6,982 men, 4,925 women and 9,819 minors, who had suffered persecution in their countries of origin and lived in insecurity, have been relocated as of today, in an organized and safe way, from Greece to other EU Member States, leaving behind years of war and suffering. Following the completion of the remaining relocations, the total number is expected to reach 22,000 beneficiaries shortly.

The figures were presented today (09/01/2018), in the framework of a joint event held in the premises of the European Parliament in Greece organized by the Greek Asylum Service, the delegated authority for the relocation program, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the executive authority for the program.

The EU relocation program was funded by the National Program of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 and led to the decrease of management of migrant's flows in Greece given that 93% of the eligible asylum seekers were successfully relocated.

The successful implementation of the program was achieved thanks to the substantial and multi-level cooperation between interested bodies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the European Commission. The complementary EU funding, through the emergency financial resources of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, also proved decisive.

The cooperation of the EU member states which accepted asylum seekers has been of great importance. Germany (5,376), France (4,399), the Netherlands (1,748), Sweden (1,658), Finland (1,202), Portugal (1,193) and Spain (1,126) are the EU Member States which have received the largest numbers of asylum seekers, within the framework of the relocation program.

Finland (137) and the Netherlands (81), followed by Germany (57), Spain (46) and Ireland (38), have welcomed the largest numbers of unaccompanied minors.

Malta, Latvia, Finland, Lithuania, Luxemburg and Sweden, as well as Norway, Switzerland and Ireland are the countries, which fully abided by their obligations of receiving asylum seekers, as derived from the decisions of the European Council.

Throughout the implementation of the emergency relocation mechanism, the Greek Asylum Service, in cooperation with other partners, national authorities and non-governmental organizations, prioritized the mapping and identification of vulnerable groups, the assurance of the best interests of the children - especially the unaccompanied ones - as well as the

framing of the necessary procedures and mechanisms for the safe transfer of the beneficiaries.

The EU relocation scheme was initially looked upon with some reservation like any new program. Having completed its official implementation period and partially fulfilled its initial targets, the temporary relocation mechanism proved feasible. It also undoubtedly constituted an important step towards an integrated approach to the management of refugee flows in Europe. This approach needs to be based on the fundamental principles of solidarity and responsibility; principles which define a real union of states. At the same time, the successful implementation of the program has an important impact on the lives of each one of the 21,726 asylum seekers, who were thus able to restart their lives under conditions of safety and dignity, without having to face the dangers of secondary movements.

Following the completion of the remaining relocations, the total number is expected to reach 22,000 beneficiaries in the next few days. The development of Relocation good practice and expertise could be further used as a model for a relocation mechanism, where necessary.

The relocation program was funded by the National Program of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020, with 100% financing from the EU and without the participation of national sources.