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PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL**

Fourth report on relocation and resettlement

1 Introduction

The Fourth Report on Relocation and Resettlement provides an updated state of play since the last report of 15 May¹ and assesses the actions undertaken by all relevant stakeholders from 13 May 2016 until 14 June (the reporting period) to deliver on the recommendations made to accelerate the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes.

Since 13 May 2016, 876 people² have arrived in Greece. This number seems to confirm the downward trend of arrivals due to the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. In total more than 57,000 migrants are present in Greece, around 8,450 on the islands and around 49,000 persons on mainland Greece³. According to estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),⁴ 65% of those present on the mainland (i.e., around 30,000 people) belong to one of the nationalities eligible for relocation. In Italy, the improvement in the weather conditions has led to the expected increase in arrivals. 14,852 people⁵ have arrived since 13 May, following a trend similar to the same period in 2015. The last week of May showed a spike in arrivals with more than 14,000 people landing on Italian shores which also comprised a sharp increase in people belonging to one of the nationalities eligible for relocation (mostly Eritreans, up to 35% of new arrivals). Based on information from the Ministry of the Interior, 4,000 Eritreans are in Italy awaiting relocation.

During the reporting period, the rate of relocation has increased compared to the previous month. 780 additional persons have been relocated, more than double the rate for the previous period, bringing the total number of persons relocated so far 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. Moreover, it is still largely the same Member States as in the previous reports that have continued to increase their relocation efforts. 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. Overall, progress on relocation therefore remains unsatisfactory.

As regards resettlement, 7,272 people have been resettled so far of the agreed 22,504 under the July 2015 scheme mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. With the agreed actions set out in the EU-Turkey Statement only starting to be applied from 4 April,⁶ 511 persons have been resettled from Turkey to the EU under the 1:1 mechanism out of which 330 since the last report.

¹ COM(2016) 222 final.

² Irregular arrivals from 14 May until 10 June- Source Frontex, as reported by Greece in the frame of the Western Balkans daily report.

³ Source: Greece authorities and UNHCR.

⁴ <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83>.

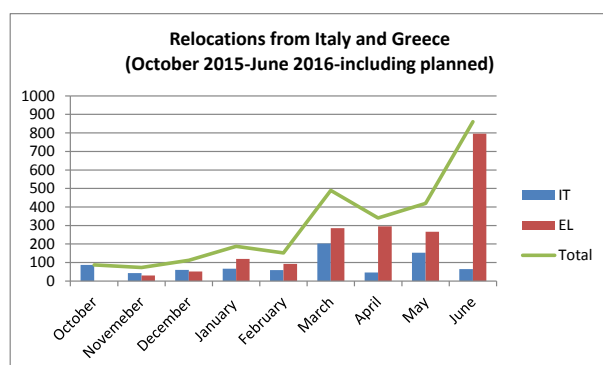
⁵ The number of irregular arrivals in Italy through sea borders from 14 May until 10 June as reported in JORA (Joint Operations Reporting Applications) and collected in the frame of the Joint Operation Triton 2016. Data may be subject to changes after validation.

⁶ SN 38/16, 18.03.2016.

2 Relocation

2.1 Actions by the Member States of relocation

From 13 May until 14 June, 780 additional persons were relocated, 594 from Greece (to Belgium, Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Malta, Portugal and Spain)⁷ and 186 from Italy (to Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland).⁸ On 9 June, France relocated 139 people from Greece, demonstrating that it is possible to relocate large numbers in one single transfer. In total, France relocated 236 people during the reporting period. Equally committed to make relocation work, Portugal relocated 168 people during the reporting period, Finland 70, Luxembourg 41 and Malta 15 continuing with regular monthly transfers. An additional 511 relocation transfers are planned until the end of June from Greece⁹ and 6 from Italy.¹⁰



Despite this increase, Member States are far from complying with their allocations under the Council Decisions. As we approach the half-way point of the duration of the Council Decisions, the rate of implementation of relocation stands at a mere 2%. Five Member States (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) have not relocated a single applicant; seven (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Romania and

Spain) have relocated only 1% of their allocation; and only four Member States (Finland, Luxembourg, Malta and Portugal) have relocated more than 10% of their allocation.¹¹

Actions to address the limited number of pledges: Eleven Member States (Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia—its first pledge, Spain and Romania)¹² and one Associated State (Switzerland)¹³ have submitted 1,955 new indications of readiness to relocate swiftly applicants for international protection (the "formal pledges"). The majority of formal pledges have been submitted for relocations from Greece (1,605) while the number of formal pledges is particularly low in Italy (350). The total

⁷ 20 to Belgium, 38 to Finland, 192 to France, 41 to Luxembourg, 13 to Malta, 58 to the Netherlands, 148 to Portugal, 84 to Spain.

⁸ 5 to Belgium, 6 to Cyprus, 32 to Finland, 44 to France, 2 to Malta, 25 to the Netherlands, 20 to Portugal, 6 to Slovenia, 22 to Spain and 24 to Switzerland.

⁹ 29 to Cyprus, 8 to Estonia, 57 to Finland, 126 to France, 31 to Ireland, 18 to Latvia, 27 to Lithuania, 42 to the Netherlands, 61 to Portugal, 52 to Romania and 60 to Spain.

¹⁰ 6 to Cyprus.

¹¹ Finland- 16%, Luxembourg- 13%, Malta- 31% and Portugal- 13%.

¹² Bulgaria 50 for Italy and 50 for Greece, Estonia 20 for Greece, Finland 100 for Italy, France 50 for Italy and 400 for Greece, Germany 100 for Greece, Latvia 55 for Greece, Lithuania 10 for Italy and 80 for Greece Luxembourg 20 for Italy and 30 for Greece, the Netherlands 50 for Italy and 100 for Greece, Portugal 400 for Greece, Romania 70 for Italy and 130 for Greece, Slovakia 10 for Greece and Spain 200 for Greece.

¹³ 30 for Greece.

number of formal pledges by Member States of relocation amounts to 7,731 (2,048¹⁴ to Italy and 5,683¹⁵ to Greece).

Austria¹⁶ and Hungary have still not submitted any pledge. In addition, Poland continues to apply a *de facto* suspension of the relocation procedure.¹⁷ Finally, most Member States are, thus far, not submitting pledges on a scale consistent with their allocation for the entire period covered by the decisions (e.g., Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Slovakia) have only pledged 1-2% of their allocation).

Actions to speed up the response time to relocation requests: the same Member States (Finland, France, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia) as in the previous reporting period and Switzerland are those making efforts to accelerate the response time to relocation requests.

The systematic additional security interviews by Member States of relocation are the main factor slowing down the response time beyond the two-week target and even beyond the two-month time-limit set out in the Council Decisions for the completion of the whole relocation procedure. Member States should increase their capacity to process relocation requests and ensure that security interviews are conducted in way that the target of a two-week response time is met. Greece and Italy, with the support of Frontex and Europol, are responsible for carrying out security checks and do not send relocation requests for applicants that raise security concerns. Member States of relocation should, in determining the need for additional security interviews, follow a proportionate approach, taking account of the checks already carried out.. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) carries out interviews to detect potential exclusion grounds during the registration of applications, a practice that could be scaled up to cover additional elements, if needed.

During the reporting period, a number of Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia) have rejected relocation requests without providing substantiated reasons or on grounds other than those specified in the Council Decisions on relocation.¹⁸ The lack of motivation of rejections of relocation requests goes against the letter of the Council Decisions on relocation and the spirit of loyal cooperation.

Actions to address challenges related to the relocation of vulnerable applicants, including unaccompanied minors: in Italy as of 31 May, 7,152 minors arrived by sea in 2016, 6,658 of which (93%) unaccompanied, representing 15% of the total arrivals and an increase of 170% compared to the same period of 2015. Among these, 1,021 were Eritrean minors (the great majority of which unaccompanied) and 32 Syrians. 3,113 unaccompanied

¹⁴ Note that in the previous reporting period a formal pledge made by Romania had not been taken into account; on the other hand a pledge from Luxembourg for 30 people was reported, while the formal pledge for 20 people only took place during the current reporting period.

¹⁵ Note that the formal pledge from Croatia for 20 people (10 for Greece and 10 for Italy) will only be active from July onwards.

¹⁶ Austria benefits from a temporary suspension of the relocation of up to 30% of applicants allocated to Austria under Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601. As a consequence Austria has a one year suspension relating to the relocation of 1,065 persons. However, the normal legal obligations apply to Austria in respect of the relocation of the remaining allocations, so pledges and relocations are nevertheless expected.

¹⁷ In early April Poland suspended the processing of 73 relocation requests that the Greek Asylum Service sent to Poland on the basis of a pledge that Poland submitted on 16 December 2015 thus *de facto* freezing the relocation procedure three and a half months after the submission of the pledge. The same applies to requests from Italy.

¹⁸ It should be noted that the Czech Republic and Slovakia have rejected the majority of relocation requests sent.

minors arrived in Italy between 1 and 31 May of which 876 Eritreans and 4 Iraqis. In Greece, although it is not possible to know the number of arrivals during the same period, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) reports that 1,609 unaccompanied minors have been referred to EKKA for accommodation since the beginning of 2016, of which 585 are accommodated in dedicated facilities and 625 are waiting to be accommodated.¹⁹

At the same time, the pace of relocation of unaccompanied minors remains extremely slow. Since 13 May, two unaccompanied minors have been relocated from Greece to Luxembourg bringing the total number of unaccompanied minors relocated to 23. Three more are scheduled to be relocated from Greece to Finland on 24 June. Only a few Member States are willing to accept relocation transfers of unaccompanied minors, and the places offered will be insufficient to relocate all unaccompanied minors eligible. More Member States should urgently make available places for unaccompanied minors as part of their formal pledges.

Actions to increase migrants' trust in the scheme: the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and EASO have been working with specific Member States of relocation (i.a., Latvia, Romania) to produce information material, in particular videos in which successfully relocated applicants share their experience. Other Member States, like Portugal, are also considering a similar approach. EASO, in cooperation with the Council Audio-Visual Service developed a video²⁰ capturing the experience of a Syrian family that was relocated to France. In Italy, IOM is testing the possibility to carry out Skype calls between relocated applicants and those to be relocated as part of the pre-departure cultural orientation.

Actions to reinforce EASO's capacity to support Italy and Greece: EASO's most recent call for experts for Italy, published on 28 May 2016, requested 35 additional experts. As of 6 June, 15 offers²¹ have been received and further are under discussion. The total number of experts deployed in Italy is 29 and 27 cultural mediators, which is insufficient to cope with the increasing number of arrivals expected during the summer months. Therefore, more and longer term nominations are urgently needed.

As regard Greece, the last call for experts²² to support the relocation scheme in Greece, requested 62 experts. So far, 58 experts have been nominated by the Member and Associated States.²³ The total number of experts deployed in Greece is 39 and 29 interpreters, which is insufficient to cope with the increase number of cases to be lodged once the mass pre-registration exercise is completed. For this reason EASO is planning to request 50 experts and 50 cultural mediators more.

2.2 Actions by Greece and Italy, including highlights from the roadmaps

- *Greece*

Actions to make the hotspots fully operational: All hotspots are now fully operational.

¹⁹ The remaining 399 probably left Greece when the northern border was opened.

²⁰ Available at: <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/video/how-relocation-works-the-experience-of-a-syrian-family>

²¹ Switzerland, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, United Kingdom, Romania and Malta.

²² This is EASO's fifth call for experts to support relocation in Greece which was launched on 21 April and which was first reported in the Third Report on Relocation and Resettlement.

²³ Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

Action to accelerate the registration and processing of migrants: The Greek Asylum Service in close cooperation with UNHCR and EASO launched a mass pre-registration exercise on 8 June, targeting around 49,000 people currently residing in mainland accommodation sites.²⁴ The exercise is expected to be completed by the end of July. Information material has been prepared in several languages (i.e. English, Arabic, Dari, Farsi and Pashto). Two mobile Registration Units (one for Southern and one for Northern Greece) of 60 people each will aim to pre-register 1,400 persons per day. The mobile Registration Units will operate in mixed teams of Asylum Service officials, deployed UNHCR and IOM staff, EASO experts (16 in total) and interpreters of the NGO MetACTION. In total more than 260 staff working six days a week will be involved in this exercise.

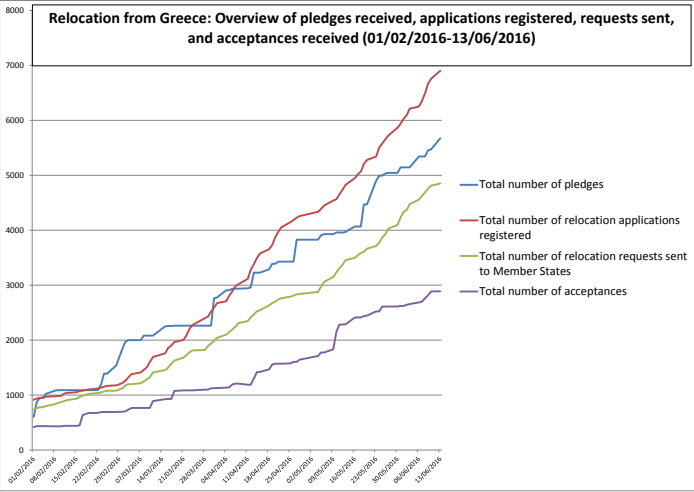
The mass pre-registration is expected to facilitate and accelerate the full lodging of applications for international protection. The exercise will also help the Greek Asylum Service's efforts to improve the identification of the majority of irregular migrants who may be in need of international protection in the mainland (including details on nationality, age, and vulnerability), with a view to channelling them to four procedural categories: relocation procedure, Dublin transfers, national asylum procedure and voluntary return. It is expected that between 60 to 65% of people pre-registered belongs to one of the nationalities eligible for relocation.

Actions to improve the registration capacity of the Greek Asylum Service: the number of mixed Asylum Service/EASO registration teams was increased during the reporting period comprising next to the Asylum Service staff, 9 experts in Athens, 7 experts in Thessaloniki and 3 experts in Alexandroupoli, while EASO experts and Dublin unit officers started working in two shifts in Athens. In order to address its staff constraints, as of 6 June the Greek Asylum Service deployed 22 personnel members to the pre-registration exercise to work as supervisors. They will cooperate and facilitate the work of 34 contractual employees, seconded by the UNHCR to the Asylum Service to work as registration clerks. This implies that during the mass pre-registration, the capacity of the Asylum Service to process relocation applications will remain at a stable rate of 150 persons processed per day and will not increase in line with the output of the pre-registration exercise.

However, a significant increase in the processing capacity is expected at the end of the pre-registration exercise. The staff currently deployed to support the exercise will return to working on processing relocation applications. In addition, the pre-registration exercise will increase the efficiency and planning of the subsequent lodging procedure. During pre-registration a file will be opened directly into the Greek asylum database allowing the mixed Asylum Service/EASO registration teams to benefit from the information already generated. As a consequence, the composition of the mixed-teams is also expected to change. Currently, the system only allows for one Greek Asylum Service case handler to work with 1 EASO expert and 1 interpreter. However, after the efficiency gains brought about by the pre-registration exercise, it is expected that one Greek Asylum Service case handler could work with 5 or more EASO experts thereby significantly increasing the daily processing capacity. To this end, EASO has offered to the Greek Asylum Service to deploy 50 registration experts (and 50 interpreters) immediately in order to ensure a smooth process between the pre-registration and the full lodging exercise.

²⁴ <https://www.easo.europa.eu/news-events/joint-press-release-pre-registration-asylum-seekers-greek-mainland-starting-today>.

Overall, as shown in the graph below, the capacity of the Greek Asylum System to process and submit relocation requests has continued increasing. As indicated in the previous report,



the number of registrations has been matched by a similar increase in the number of pledges. However, the capacity to submit relocation requests is rising at a much faster pace than the replies by Member States of relocation. This gap has actually increased during the reporting period: Greece sent a total of 1,481 relocation requests while only 605 new acceptances were received by the Member States of relocation. This difference in pace can become a significant bottleneck in the follow-up to the mass pre-registration exercise.

More generally, substantial improvements are still needed in the registration capacity of the Greek Asylum Service to process asylum applications beyond relocation as reported in the Commission Recommendation addressed to the Hellenic Republic on the specific urgent measures to be taken by Greece in view of the resumption of transfers under Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013 (C(2016)3805).

Actions to improve the coordination and to speed up the response time to relocation requests: The endorsement of the Relocation Protocol has been postponed until 8 July to take into account the first results of the mass pre-registration exercise. Initially registration was carried out in Greek and the essential information was translated into English in the relocation request form. The registration forms are now being filled in by the EASO Member States experts in English which are then transmitted in full to the potential Member State of relocation, thereby facilitating the review of the files by the Member States of relocation.

Actions to improve the reception capacity in Greece: As of 10 June, the total reception capacity in Greece stands at over 50,000 places²⁵ in temporary facilities and permanent reception places both for irregular migrants, and persons in possible need for international protection who have expressed their will or have lodged asylum applications. However, these facilities need to be substantially improved to meet appropriate standards.²⁶ Out of the 20,000 places committed for relocation applicants under the rental scheme by the UNHCR in December 2015, as of 6 June, 6,385 places were available including 1,833 places in hotels/entire buildings, 3,351 places in apartments, 908 places in the Lagadikia centre, 165 places in host families, and 128 places in dedicated facilities for unaccompanied minors.

²⁵ <http://www.media.gov.gr/index.php>;
<http://rrse-smi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d5f377f7f6f2418b8ebadaae638df2e1>
 These temporary emergency and permanent facilities are established on the Aegean islands in the hotspots as well as on the mainland. As of 2 June 2016, there are currently only 1 108 permanent accommodation places that exclusively host applicants for international protection and unaccompanied minors.

²⁶ Commission Recommendation addressed to the Hellenic Republic on the specific urgent measures to be taken by Greece in view of the resumption of transfers under Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, C(2016) 3805.

Together with the slow response time by the Member States of relocation, one of the main factors slowing down relocation in Greece is the fact that relocation applicants are scattered all over the country. Greece committed to establish three relocation centres (two in the North and a major transit centre in the Attica region) with a capacity to accommodate 6,000 applicants with the objective of centralising several steps of the relocation workflow (e.g., health checks, pre-departure information, additional checks, or even, if possible, notifications). In this context, the UNHCR agreed to make 6,000 places from the rental scheme available to relocation centres to accommodate all fully registered relocation applicants.²⁷

However, as of 14 June, only one of the three relocation centres committed by the Greek authorities, namely Lagadikia, has been established. For the remaining two, the Greek authorities have not yet designated suitable sites. Discussions are still ongoing between the UNHCR and the Greek authorities regarding the provision of more sites for the construction of dedicated relocation centres, notably in the Attica region.²⁸ The establishment of these relocation centres is of the utmost urgency to avoid further bottlenecks and operational problems once the mass pre-registration exercise is concluded.

- *Italy*

Actions to make the hotspots fully operational: Currently the hotspots of Pozzallo, Lampedusa, Trapani and Taranto are operational. In Pozzallo, additional works are still needed to further improve the functionality and working conditions of the hotspot. In Taranto, the height of the fencing around the facility should be extended and air conditioning installed to ensure an orderly management of the migration flows in the facility. Due to peaks in the number of arrivals during the past days, it has become clear that the available capacity of the operational hotspots would not be sufficient for the summer months. As a consequence, Italy should accelerate the setting of further hotspots already announced.

Given that a large number of disembarkations take place outside the current hotspots areas, the Italian authorities together with the EU agencies should speed up the setting up of mobile hotspots, which should become operational before the summer. On 7 June 2016, the Commission provided the Italian Ministry of the Interior with a list of proposals for hotspot improvements, based on past visits and with input from EU agencies.

Actions to improve coordination: The Standard Operating Procedures on Italian hotspots²⁹ have been adopted and circulated to the relevant local authorities on 17 May 2016. Information session on these procedures for the relevant stakeholders in all hotspots (to be organised by the Italian Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Commission, Frontex, Europol, EASO, UNHCR and IOM) will be organised.

²⁷ Delegation Agreement with UNHCR for the 20,000 places rental scheme primarily benefits asylum seekers eligible for relocation, but can also benefit other applicants for family reunification in another EU Member State and persons seeking asylum in Greece, particularly vulnerable applicants. The 6,000 places to be made available for relocation centres are expected to become the main accommodation for relocation beneficiaries.

²⁸ The relocation centres are to be funded by the EU as part of the delegation agreement with UNHCR for the accommodation rental scheme.

²⁹ The text is publicly available at: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/hotspot>.

However, coordination between the various Italian departments and actors in the context of relocation needs to improve particularly with regard to the transfer of information from one step in the relocation procedure to another. To this end, the Commission is supporting the Italian authorities in the development of a relocation workflow with the aim to ensure a swift and speedy implementation of the relocation procedure. The document will describe the task of each actor and establish specific timeframes for each step in the relocation workflow, including the response time by Member States of relocation to speed up relocation. A first draft of the relocation workflow is expected to be discussed in the next Liaison Officers meeting in mid-July.

Actions to improve processing capacities in Italy: the capacity of the Italian authorities to register and process applications needs to increase. Based on EASO's reports, a significant number of applicants are waiting for their application to be registered/lodged and this is a necessary step to be able to be relocated. EASO is providing support to Italy but additional experts will be required to cope with the increasing number of applicants of nationalities eligible for relocation arriving in Italy. Two new registration hubs have been operating in Mineo and Taranto as of May 2016. In addition, Italy has three specific relocation hubs operational (Villa Sikania/Agrigento, Bari and Crotone). The efficiency of the relocation hubs and more generally of registration could improve, if mobile teams (if needed mixed teams of EASO experts and Questura) could register and ensure the full lodging of applications in the relocation hubs and other locations, particularly in Rome.³⁰

Actions to speed up the response time to relocation requests: Italy has a very strict policy of not allowing additional security interviews by the Member State of relocation. As a consequence, some Member States are not relocating any applicants from Italy. Flexibility is needed on both sides: on the Member States side to find alternatives to security interviews and strictly limit any request to the minimum (only individual and duly justified cases) and on the Italian side, to allow in such limited cases, these interviews to happen. The possibility to involve EASO experts in carrying out more extensive interviews as well as the for Italian authorities to send a security form listing the various checks the person has undergone at each step of the procedure and the result of these checks, could also help to build trust and reduce the request of additional interviews by Member States of relocation. Nominating a security correspondent on the Italian side could also facilitate the process Italy and the other Member States are also encouraged to develop swiftly bilateral cooperation agreements or to use other existing police cooperation channels and instruments to permit law enforcement authorities and Europol to compare and exchange fingerprint data for security and criminal purposes.

Actions to address challenges related to the relocation of vulnerable applicants and unaccompanied minors: specific procedures to facilitate the relocation of unaccompanied minors have not yet been developed. This is becoming a key priority given also that they (as well as other vulnerable groups) should be treated as a priority according to the Council Decisions on relocation and given also the increasing number of Eritrean unaccompanied minors arriving in Italy.

Actions to increase migrants' trust in the scheme and avoid withdrawals: in the initial stages of relocation, those eligible were unwilling to join the scheme due partially to lack of

³⁰ This possibility exists in some hubs but not in Castelnuovo di Porto which has not been officially designated as relocation hub but through which a significant number of relocation applicants transit before the transfer to another Member State.

trust. The situation has changed significantly. According to reports from EASO, UNHCR and organisations managing the various C.A.R.A (centro di accoglienza richiedenti asilo), hotspots and relocation hubs, almost all those eligible for relocation are adamant to participate in the scheme. However, this trust is fragile and the length of the procedure and possible problems in the reception conditions in the Member States of relocation can easily undermine the credibility of the scheme and reverse this trend.

2.3 Actions by the Commission and EU agencies

- *European Commission*

The Commission has continued supporting Italy and Greece on the ground. The Commission has organised specific meetings to address the bottlenecks in the relocation of unaccompanied minors and has recently finalised several visits to Italy to identify possible solutions to speed up relocation transfers to reach a pace similar to Greece. The Commission is still working with the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the EU to develop a questionnaire to identify Member States' security concerns and to find ways to address them.

The Commission has been providing substantial funding to Greece to support the country in its efforts to bring its asylum management system up to EU standards. On 20 May EUR 56 million in emergency funding from Home Affairs funds (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Internal Security Fund (ISF)) have been awarded respectively to the Greek authorities (EUR 13 million), to IOM (EUR 13 million) and to UNHCR (EUR 30 million), to increase the capacities of the Greek authorities to register newly arriving migrants and to process their asylum claims, while on 24 May the Commission awarded EUR 25 million in emergency funding (AMIF) to EASO to enhance its capacity to further support the Greek authorities. With this latest funding, the Commission has awarded to Greece, since the beginning of 2015, a total of EUR 262 million in emergency assistance from Home Affairs funds (AMIF and ISF), either directly to the Greek authorities or through Union Agencies and international organisations operating in the country.³¹

Finally, as part of its monitoring of the implementation of the Council Decisions on relocation, the Commission raised and will continue to raise concerns with those Member States that so far have not complied with their obligations.

- *European Asylum Support Office*

Actions to speed up the relocation process and increase the registration capacity of the Greece and Italy: EASO has increased its support to the Greek Asylum Service in the reporting period from 24 Member States experts to 39. 19 experts are supporting the registration process directly through joint processing. One expert supports the Dublin Unit and 18 are involved in information provision managing two hotlines and providing information in the camps regarding registration, relocation and Dublin procedures. A further planned increase of staff, with another 18 Member States experts to support the registration, had to be postponed as a number of the Asylum Service staff are engaged in the pre-

³¹ This emergency assistance comes on top of the EUR 509 million allocated to Greece for the period 2014-2020 through its national programmes under the Home Affairs Funds (AMIF and ISF), where substantial funding is also available to support the implementation of asylum policies.

registration exercise. To avoid the build up of a back-log at the level of registration, once the pre-registration has been completed, EASO is still planning to increase its support to the registration process. EASO visited Greece to look into the possibilities to further support the matching process (aimed at matching applicants to specific Member States) and made recommendations to enhance it.

In Italy, EASO is deploying 29 out of 61 requested experts from Member States and associated countries: 6 experts in the hotspots, 5 experts in two mobile teams (based in Rome and Catania), 12 experts in relocation hubs, and 6 experts in the Dublin Unit in Rome. EASO is also deploying up to 48 cultural mediators (for Arabic, Tigrinya and Kurdish) to support the relocation process (as of 6 June 36 cultural mediators deployed on the ground).

EASO asylum support teams have drafted a contingency plan which has been agreed with the Italian authorities to manage the expected increase of arrivals providing for additional support measures to be implemented to ensure that relocation process can continue at a suitable pace. According to this plan, 74 additional EASO experts would be needed. EASO also continues to apply a flexible approach thanks to the deployment of mobile teams, although given the increase in the number of applicants for relocation, the mobile teams in Catania and Rome need to be reinforced. Additional nominations will also be needed once new hotspots are opened in line with plans announced by Italian authorities.

3 Resettlement

Based on the information received from the participating States 7,272 people have been resettled in the period until 10 June 2016 in the framework of the resettlement scheme of 20 July 2015 to 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). A majority of States participating in the scheme indicated that their resettlement efforts were primarily, but not exclusively, directed at Syrians staying in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Member States should consider in the future the case for including resettlement from priority countries identified for the compacts.³²

The number of resettlements from Turkey continues to increase as Member States finalise their assessments of files referred to them by Turkey via UNHCR. Since 4 April 2016, 511 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey under the resettlement part of the 1:1 scheme.³³ An increased number of Member States are also actively participating in the scheme. Since the last progress report, in addition to Finland, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden, resettlements have also taken place to Italy, Luxembourg, and Portugal.

Standard Operating Procedures for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey, to be activated once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced, are currently being developed in the Council in close cooperation with the Commission, EASO, UNHCR and IOM. The text was shared with Turkey on 7 June with a view to finalising negotiations by the end of the month.

³² Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, COM(2016) 385 final, p.8. This will be done in full respect of the relevant Protocols to the Treaties as they apply to certain Member States.

³³ Second Report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (COM(2016) 349).

While the Council, at the level of COREPER, has endorsed the proposal tabled by the Commission on 21 March 2016 to make available further places for resettlement or other forms of legal admission from Turkey by amending Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September to relocate applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece, the Opinion of the European Parliament on the Decision is still pending. MEP Ska Keller (Rapporteur) presented a draft Opinion to LIBE Committee on 26 May and the deadline for amendments was set at 9 June. Several Member States have stated their expectation that the agreement on the proposal should be reached as soon as possible.

4 Way forward

Greece continues facing a humanitarian crisis that requires a quick and full implementation of the obligations assumed by Member States in the Council Decisions on relocation. As for Italy, as per the expected seasonable patterns of migration, the number of arrivals is increasing with sharp spikes over short periods with several simultaneous disembarkations of large numbers of people and pointing to a rapid increase of applicants for relocation.

The European Council Conclusions³⁴ have recognised the urgency of the situation and called for an acceleration of relocation. The calls made by the Heads of State or Government must be matched with determined action by the competent national services on the ground.

The Commission acknowledges the progress and efforts that have been made, which are reflected in the increased rate of relocation. However, the results achieved do not yet measure up to the calls made and the scale of the challenge faced. The Commission considered in its First Report on Relocation and Resettlement³⁵ that at least 6,000 relocations should be completed per month.

The summer months will be critical for relocation. Greece has started a mass, rapid pre-registration exercise that will accelerate the identification and full registration of relocation applicants.

Greece needs to continue increasing its processing capacity to avoid creating a bottleneck after the pre-registration is completed so that applicants can fully lodge their applications as swiftly as possible, establish the additional relocation centres and relocate those that are eligible.

In Italy, the sharp increase of relocation applicants (4,000 Eritreans to be relocated), due to the success of information provision and the increase in arrivals of nationals eligible for relocation, requires Italian authorities to quickly step up its hotspots and processing capacity. Italy should also establish specific procedures allowing for the relocation of unaccompanied minors and improve their accommodation conditions.

For their part, Member States should urgently provide an adequate response by increasing the number of pledges, carefully planning relocation transfers for the upcoming six months and

³⁴ European Council Conclusions of 7 March 2016. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/07-eu-turkey-meeting-statement>

³⁵ COM(2016) 165 final.

reducing the response time to relocation requests (including limiting additional security checks to only specific and duly justified cases). Greece and Italy will also need additional support from Member States to deploy EASO experts to increase the registration and these should be deployed for at least six months.

The Commission urges Member States to fully comply with their obligations under the Council Decisions on relocation, and calls on all Member States to engage more actively in relocation and pledge and relocate in accordance with their allocation. Those Member States who have not yet made any pledges, or have not yet relocated anyone, should do so without delay.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor and report monthly on the implementation of the two Council Decisions on relocation. The Commission reserves the right to take action against those Member States not complying with their obligations.

In parallel, Member States should continue delivering on their resettlement commitments, including as part of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.³⁶

³⁶ Second Report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (COM(2016) 349).