



Council of the  
European Union

144456/EU XXV. GP  
Eingelangt am 23/05/17

Brussels, 23 May 2017  
(OR. en)

9601/17

JAI 537  
ASIM 57  
CO EUR-PREP 27

## COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director
date of receipt:	17 May 2017
To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2017) 260 final
Subject:	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL Twelfth report on relocation and resettlement

Delegations will find attached document COM(2017) 260 final.

---

Encl.: COM(2017) 260 final



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

Strasbourg, 16.5.2017  
COM(2017) 260 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL**

**Twelfth report on relocation and resettlement**

# 1 Introduction

*The Twelfth Report on Relocation and Resettlement provides an updated state of play on the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes since the last report of 12 April,<sup>1</sup> and outlines the gaps and outstanding actions that still need to be taken to deliver on the commitments under both schemes.*

*Throughout its implementation, one element has remained critical for the success of the scheme: the mutual cooperation and trust between the Member States of relocation and the beneficiary Member States in complying with and implementing the Council Decisions on relocation. As the relocation procedure became operational, and as the majority of Member States began to pledge on a regular basis, the monthly transfers increased significantly. Also the two beneficiary Member States made further efforts to improve the mutual cooperation and trust in order to speed up relocations. As a result, in the first four months of 2017 Member States have relocated almost the same number as in the whole of 2016. In total, more than 18,000 people have been relocated so far, proving that relocation works if there is the will to abide by what was agreed together in a spirit of sincere cooperation.*

*Relocation remains a key measure to alleviate the pressure on Greece and Italy by sharing the responsibility in dealing with applicants clearly in need of international protection. Although arrivals of migrants continue at low levels, Greece remains under pressure with over 62,000 migrants still present in its territory, with around 13,500 on the islands and around 48,500 persons on the mainland. In Italy, 45,130 migrants have arrived since the beginning of 2017, a 40% increase compared to the corresponding period in 2016. However, the vast majority of those who arrived do not belong to nationalities in clear need of international protection, a requirement under the Council Decisions to qualify for eligibility for relocation. The number of arrivals of Eritreans, the main nationality eligible for relocation in Italy, has dropped significantly in 2017: from the second country of origin of arrivals in 2016, representing 11.5% of arrivals, to not even being in the top ten nationalities of arrivals, and roughly representing only 2.3% of arrivals. Despite this steep decline, the number of Eritreans who arrived to Italy in 2016 and who should still be registered and relocated to other Member States is still around 11,000.*

*As previously reported, the number of people eligible for relocation present in Italy and Greece is below what is foreseen in the Council Decisions. In Greece, where the number of registered applicants for relocation is expected to remain stable (27,146 people registered for relocation of which 12,707 have already been relocated) around 12,400 people still need to be relocated. In Italy, more than 8,300 people have been registered for relocation so far, of which 5,711 have already been relocated and an additional 700 should be registered soon. In addition to this, over 1,100 Eritreans have so far arrived in 2017 and would still need to be registered for relocation. Relocating all those eligible by September 2017 is therefore possible and feasible and should be a priority for all Member States. These lower numbers should not lead Member States to lessen their efforts as the current pace of relocation is still insufficient to relocate all those eligible by September 2017 and a continuous significant acceleration is required, particularly in Greece, in line with the monthly targets set by the Commission in its Tenth Report.<sup>2</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> COM(2017) 212 final.

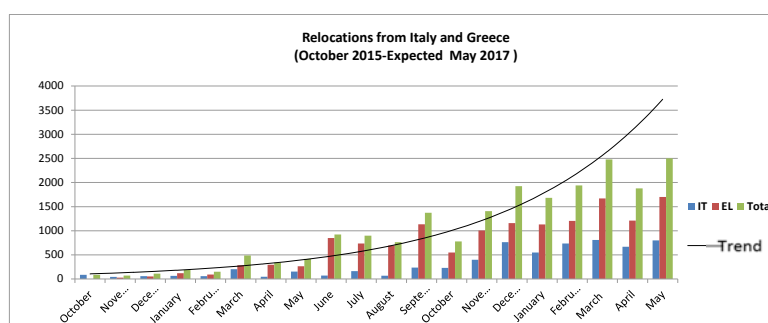
<sup>2</sup> COM(2017) 202 final.

*Relocation as provided in the Council Decisions is a legal obligation. It is also a joint effort that requires all Member States to relocate both from Italy and Greece. While many Member States have increased their efforts, there are regrettably still a number of Member States that have not relocated a single person in breach of their legal obligations and in disregard of their commitments to Italy, Greece and the other Member States, which respect their commitments by relocating.*

*While many of the recommendations from the Eleventh Report still stand (due to the two-month cycle nature of relocation), this Twelfth Report focuses mainly on those Member States that have systematically declined to implement the Council Decisions and have failed to deliver in line with their commitments.*

*As regards resettlement, the implementation of the July 2015 Conclusions to resettle 22,504 people is well on track with over two thirds of the agreed number already resettled. This represents significant progress compared to the limited numbers Member States used to resettle in 2014 and 2015 via national or multilateral schemes and demonstrates the added value of strengthened EU-level cooperation in this area.*

## 2 Relocation



**The pace of relocation continues presenting a positive trend despite certain logistical difficulties. Additional efforts from all Member States of relocation would allow reaching the set targets. The targets set by the Commission aim at ensuring the relocation of**

all those eligible currently present in Italy and Greece in an effective and timely manner, avoiding any operational and logistical bottlenecks that would result if the majority of remaining transfers was to be implemented in the last weeks of September. Meeting those targets requires additional efforts and flexibility at each step of the relocation procedure, from the pledges until the transfer, including sufficient reception capacities in the Member States of relocation after the relocation takes place.

Almost all Member States are now relocating from Italy and Greece. **Hungary, Poland and Austria remain the only Member States that have not relocated** a single person in breach of their legal obligations<sup>3</sup>, although Austria has announced its intention to start relocating soon. Moreover, the **Czech Republic** has not pledged since May 2016 and has not relocated anyone since August 2016, having relocated less than 1% of its allocation.

### 2.1 A few Member States are still not pledging and/or relocating

**Currently almost all Member States are active in both Italy and Greece and have**

<sup>3</sup> Hungary and Slovakia, supported by Poland, have challenged the legality of the second Council Decision on relocation. However, an annulment action does not have suspensive effect. The hearing of the cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union took place on 10 May.

**increased the regularity of the pledges.** Member States that had been less active for a while (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Slovenia, Spain or Romania), are now pledging on a regular basis. Latvia has announced its plans to pledge on a monthly basis for Italy and Sweden has shown a determined commitment to comply with its obligations and in April alone pledged 1,650 places (500 for Italy and 1,150 for Greece). Belgium, Lithuania and Malta have announced further increases in their monthly pledges in the near future. Portugal has now started pledging again, while eliminating the backlog. The previous announcement by Austria to start relocating very soon from Italy with a focus on vulnerable applicants, particularly unaccompanied minors, has been followed up with a concrete pledge of 50 places.<sup>4</sup> Now, Austria should start pledging for Greece as soon as possible.

**Certain Member States are not pledging and relocating at all from Greece and Italy:**

- Hungary has never pledged and relocated since the adoption of the Council Decisions on relocation;
- Poland pledged in December 2015 and then discontinued its participation. In April 2016, Poland suspended the processing of 73 relocation requests that the Greek Asylum Service sent to Poland *de facto* freezing the relocation procedure three and a half months after submitting the pledge, and therefore never relocated. The same applies to requests from Italy;
- The Czech Republic has not pledged since May 2016. The Czech Republic was participating on a very limited basis with a strict preference policy – accepting only applicants with ID or travel documents – rejecting all other applicants. The Czech Republic has not relocated anybody since August 2016 and relocated in total only 12 applicants from Greece and none from Italy (less than 1% of its legal obligation).

<p><b>Hungary and Poland should start pledging and relocating immediately, while the Czech Republic should start pledging and relocating again without delay.</b></p>
---

In addition, some other **Member States which** have relocated from Greece **have not been relocating from Italy**.<sup>5</sup>

- Bulgaria and Slovakia have strict preference policies (Bulgaria is reluctant to accept Eritreans while Slovakia only admits single women with children and people with travel documents), which makes it almost impossible for Italy to find applicants meeting those preferences. Bulgaria should start accepting Eritreans and Slovakia show a flexible approach to its preferences and start pledging and relocating from Italy as soon as possible;
- Estonia and Ireland have not relocated anybody from Italy yet, because of Italy's strict policy regarding additional security interviews by Member States of relocation;<sup>6</sup>
- Cyprus, which has not pledged for more than three months now, should start pledging for Italy and relocating as soon as possible.

<sup>4</sup> Austria officially pledged on 12 May.

<sup>5</sup> Slovakia never pledged for Italy, while Estonia has not pledged since December 2015, Ireland since November 2015, Bulgaria has not pledged since June 2016.

<sup>6</sup> The Commission hopes that the ongoing contacts between Italy and Estonia will bring mutually acceptable solutions on this issue.

All other Member States should continue, as a minimum, with their current monthly efforts from both Greece and Italy.

## **2.2 Actions needed to speed up relocations**

### **Identification and registration of migrants for relocation: Italy needs to do more in order to speed up relocation**

As previously reported, Greece finalised the registration ("lodging of application for international protection") of all those who were covered by the pre-registration exercise, including those eligible for relocation. As of 12 May, in total 27,146 people have lodged their applications under the relocation scheme; 12,707 people have been already relocated while 12,385 still need to be relocated.<sup>7</sup> Although more applicants for relocation might still be registered before 26 September 2017 and some might be excluded from the relocation scheme, the total number of persons registered for relocation is expected to remain stable.

Italy has so far registered for relocation about 8,300 people, of whom 5,711 were already relocated. According to the Italian authorities, an additional 700 applicants are in the pipeline to be registered. In addition, in 2017, more than 1,100 Eritreans have arrived in Italy and should also be registered for relocation. However, around 20,700 Eritreans arrived in Italy in 2016 alone. It is essential to ensure that all migrants eligible for relocation who arrived and are arriving in Italy through hotspots and other ports of disembarkation are timely registered for relocation.

Italy **should therefore urgently and continuously speed up the procedures to identify and register for relocation all those eligible**. To this end, Italy should increase its registration capacity in the Questure and the capacity and the number of staff processing applications and take charge requests for relocation in the Dublin Unit, if needed with support by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). It should also make full use of its territorial administration and the existing EASO teams to reach out, inform and register for relocation the large number of eligible migrants hosted outside the original relocation hubs. To ensure this, efforts should be made to raise awareness about the relocation scheme in the Questure and in the reception centres.

It is also crucial that all those eligible for relocation arriving in Italy through hotspots or other ports of disembarkation are orderly channelled to **specifically designated relocation hubs** as foreseen in Italy's Roadmap. The current practice, whereby migrants eligible for relocation are spread all over the Italian territory, while the designated relocation hubs are often under-used because they host a majority of migrants of non-eligible nationalities, is complicating the registration for relocation and creating logistical problems in the last phases of the relocation procedure, particularly with regard to ensuring proper health checks before the transfer takes place. Recently, Italy has made efforts to centralise the last stages of the relocation procedure in a few centres and to transfer relocation applicants 10 days before the departure to reception centres in or close to Rome. This is a welcome step that however needs to be further systematised and complemented with generally a more centralised reception for relocation

---

<sup>7</sup> 2,054 candidates for relocation have been rejected by the Member States of relocation, were channelled to the Dublin procedure or to the national Greek procedure (e.g., because the submission was revoked by Greece for administrative reasons, negative security check by the Greek police before submission, etc.), or, a very limited number, passed away.

applicants.

To support Italy in this endeavour, the Commission has recently awarded EUR 15.33 million in emergency assistance under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for the provision of accommodation, food, health care and linguistic and cultural mediation. The assistance will also help reinforce the provision of information regarding relocation to those eligible for the scheme.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore now vital to make sure that all eligible persons are registered for relocation and effectively and swiftly relocated.

*The matching procedure: Member States making progress but more needs to be done particularly regarding vulnerable applicants*

**EASO's matching tool** will be operational on 23 May in Greece and will contribute to increasing the efficiency of the matching process by processing a high number of cases and rapidly identifying the applicants who could be relocated to a particular Member State. However, as mentioned in the previous report, for the tool to be effective, Member States should communicate preferences that are flexible enough.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, some **Member States are encouraged to increase their monthly pledges** to ensure a sufficient number of pledges for the matching procedure (whereby Italy and Greece match an individual applicant with a specific Member State). In this sense, Belgium (as per its announcement), Spain and Croatia should significantly increase their monthly pledges for Italy and Greece, while Germany, Romania and Slovakia should significantly increase their monthly pledges for Greece; France should significantly increase its pledges for Italy and pledge on a monthly basis while continuing its currently monthly efforts for Greece.

All Member States should **avoid excluding vulnerable applicants** from their preferences since they are to be relocated as a priority. In this sense, the focus of some Member States, such as Spain, on particularly vulnerable applicants is welcomed. It is also vital that Member States create the capacity to accommodate particularly vulnerable applicants. All Member States should be ready to welcome all types of migrants (large families, single male applicants) and their fair share of vulnerable applicants, including unaccompanied minors and persons with significant health problems.

*Reducing response time by the Member States of relocation*

Member States have continued making efforts to reduce overall their response time to relocation requests. However, some delays persist particularly in some Member States and

---

<sup>8</sup> This brings the total emergency assistance awarded by the Commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) since 2015 to support the Italian authorities as well as international organisations operating in Italy to EUR 74.09 million. This funding comes on top of the EUR 592.6 million already allocated to Italy under the national programmes for the period 2014-2020 (EUR 347.7 million from AMIF and EUR 244.9 million from ISF).

<sup>9</sup> The tool takes into account the different matching criteria simultaneously (qualifications and characteristics of the applicants, priority to vulnerable applicants, the capacities of Member State to receive vulnerable persons, preferences, deadlines). In addition to increasing the efficiency of the matching process, the tool will also safeguard the transparency of the process by keeping track of the profiles of the persons relocated, the fair distribution of particularly vulnerable applicants and the degree to which matching criteria (characteristics and qualifications which may facilitate integration) were used. EASO has developed specific guidance and a specific form for "preferences".

Associated Countries (Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Spain and Switzerland) with pending replies from previous pledges (which means replies taking more than a month instead of the 10-working day period set out in the Relocation Protocols). Overall **Member States** are **encouraged to further increase their capacity to process application requests** and send replies within the 10-working day timeframe agreed in the Relocation Protocols.

### Overcoming operational hurdles

With 4,000 people awaiting transfer in Greece and 1,388 in Italy, **delays in transfers** have decreased compared to the previous reporting period, but **remain a major bottleneck** in the relocation procedure.

Member States with **reception capacity limitations** (Ireland, Finland and Portugal) have worked towards solving the difficulties. Progress has also been made regarding the quantity and quality of the information provision and cultural orientation sessions. In addition to the good practices highlighted in the previous report, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has organised a specific training for Liaison Officers in Greece to improve the delivery of cultural orientation sessions. After the success of this training, IOM will replicate it in Italy. The majority of the Member States have now provided EASO with their information material and EASO is now reviewing them to propose improvements, as necessary. EASO has also finalised a new leaflet on relocation which focuses both on applicants' rights and obligations. EASO will need Member States' support to widely distribute this new leaflet, not only at the hotspots and reception centres in Greece and Italy, but throughout the territory of the Member States of relocation. EASO has also finalised the specific video on relocation to Portugal focusing on Eritreans.<sup>10</sup>

**Additional security checks**, including interviews, by some Member States of relocation and Associated Countries (particularly Estonia, Ireland and Switzerland) continue to pose challenges. Greece and Italy have obligations to carry out, with the support of EU agencies, the necessary security checks on applicants before a relocation request is sent out. Member States that wish to carry out additional security checks systematically should show flexibility and find mutually acceptable solutions with Greece and Italy on their organisation in order not to slow down the relocation process. Such solutions will also further improve mutual cooperation and increase the relocation pace from Italy and Greece to all other Member States. Any additional security checks, including security interviews, should be carried out within the 10-working day target agreed in the Relocation Protocols. In this sense, Member States are encouraged to follow the example of the good cooperation between the Netherlands, France and Greece to ensure relocations can take place within this timeframe. An important component in this respect is to ensure that the appropriate capacity for conducting interviews is in place as soon as possible.

Moreover, in April, **70% of the flights occurred in the last week of the month**. As mentioned in the previous report more flexibility from the Member States of relocation and more coordination among them are desirable from sending acceptances to the organisation of flights. The Commission will organise a meeting on 19 May in Athens to assist IOM and the Greek authorities to overcome these logistical coordination challenges.

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTAmg2CeV3Q>



### 2.3 Relocation of unaccompanied minors: progress in Greece, first steps in Italy

In its Communication on the protection of children in migration of 12 April 2017,<sup>11</sup> which sets out actions to be urgently implemented in order to strengthen the protection of children in migration, the Commission recalled that it is essential for Member States to step up their relocation pledges, specifically for unaccompanied and separated children.

In **Greece**, as of 15 May 359 unaccompanied minors have been relocated out of the 576 unaccompanied minors eligible for relocation. Since the last report, more Member States have offered places for this category of vulnerable applicants. **Member States are encouraged to continue providing places as needed<sup>12</sup> to relocate the registered separated minors** and follow Finland's example showing as much flexibility as possible regarding the relocation of married children. In this context, Member States should explore ways of facilitating the relocation of married minors always in line with the best interests of the child. Following the recommendations of the previous report, Germany is now showing more flexibility regarding the proof of extended family links, particularly in relation to separated children.

In 2016, a record number of 25,772 unaccompanied minors (91.6% of the 28,129 minors) arrived in **Italy**, including 3,806 Eritreans, 218 Syrians, 394 Iraqis and 13 Yemenis (nationalities eligible for relocation). In 2017, by 11 May, a further 5,602 unaccompanied minors have arrived in Italy, of whom around 250 belong to a nationality eligible for relocation.

**The first relocation of unaccompanied minors from Italy took place during the reporting period.**<sup>13</sup> Two unaccompanied minors were relocated to the Netherlands in April and May and several other applications are under examination. To achieve this, the active inter-institutional cooperation of the Italian authorities both at national and local level and the support of the Commission team in Italy, EASO and IOM should continue.

Italy should now build on the experience of these first relocations and **standardise the procedures** to enable fully the relocation of unaccompanied minors including by facilitating the swift appointment of guardians for arriving unaccompanied minors, so that they can be assisted to possibly apply for international protection and, where appropriate, to be channelled to relocation. The swift appointment of guardians and prioritising relocation are flagged as urgent actions in the Communication on the protection of children in migration. Adequate information provision on relocation is crucial and should always be ensured both at disembarkation points and in the reception centres to all unaccompanied minors. In assessing the best interest of each eligible child, guardians should always consider the possibility of relocation. To ease procedures, as already mentioned in previous reports, Italy should consider the designation of one or more dedicated relocation facilities for unaccompanied minors. EASO can help with provision of information, registration of the requests and assessment of the best interest of the child. For their part, Member States should continue making places available for unaccompanied minors in their pledges and provide the Italian authorities with specific information on the reception foreseen.

---

<sup>11</sup> COM(2017) 211 final.

<sup>12</sup> Although, in principle, only additional 19 pledges are needed, the need for further pledges may increase if some of the Dublin requests for unaccompanied minors sent to other Member States are rejected.

<sup>13</sup> Previously, one separated children had been relocated to the Netherlands, but never an unaccompanied minor travelling completely on his/her own.

### 3 Resettlement

According to recently published Eurostat data,<sup>14</sup> the EU Member States received over 14,205 resettled refugees in 2016 via national and multilateral schemes. This is a significant progress in comparison to 8,155 people resettled in 2015 and 6,550 in 2014. This increase in numbers coincides with the first full year of the implementation of EU-level resettlement schemes and shows the value and potential of a strengthened EU-level cooperation and coordination in the area of resettlement.

Progress continues to be observed in the implementation of the Conclusions of 20 July 2015, with over two thirds of the 22,504 resettlements agreed already completed. Since 10 April 2016, 671 people have been resettled under the scheme mainly from Turkey, but also from Jordan and Lebanon.

As of 12 May 2017, 16,163 people have been resettled to 21 States (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). Seven Member States (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) as well as three Associated Countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) have already fulfilled their pledges. While a larger number of Member States is resettling than in previous years, ten Member States have not resettled under this scheme yet.<sup>15</sup> It is becoming increasingly questionable whether Member States with large gaps between their commitments and actual implementation will be able to fulfil their commitments.

A majority of States participating in the scheme to implement the Conclusions of 20 July 2015 indicated that their resettlement efforts were primarily, but not exclusively, directed at Syrians staying in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This includes efforts from Member States to resettle Syrians from Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016. Since 4 April 2016, 5,695 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey under the resettlement part of the EU-Turkey Statement. Since the last reporting period 1,077 Syrians have been resettled under this mechanism and the remaining number of all pledges now stands at 25,040. Resettlement under the EU-Turkey Statement has so far taken place to Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Finland and Sweden. Additionally, Norway has so far resettled 521 Syrians from Turkey since 4 April 2016.

The Member States resettling under the EU-Turkey Statement are advancing well with preparing further operations, including missions to Turkey to interview resettlement candidates. Austria has now started resettling under the scheme and Romania is currently preparing its first resettlements. Recently Croatian experts attended as observers the Belgian verification mission in Ankara. This is an example of the kind of cooperation between the experienced and emerging resettlement Member States which the Commission has encouraged and which should be further replicated.

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8001715/3-26042017-AP-EN.pdf/05e315db-1fe3-49d1-94ff-06f7e995580e>

<sup>15</sup> This group of Member States includes Luxembourg, even though Luxembourg has already resettled Syrians from Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement and is expected to resettle also within the 20 July Conclusions in the next months.

There are however also Member States that have received files from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) already in summer of 2016 but have thereafter taken no action (Bulgaria and the Czech Republic). In addition, there are Member States that have neither resettled nor taken sufficient action to resettle from Turkey (Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom). These Member States are encouraged to contribute to the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement.

In order to support resettlement under the EU-Turkey Statement and discuss the ongoing operations, the EU Delegation in Ankara has continued weekly meetings with the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) of Turkey. The EU Delegation also meets on a weekly basis with Member States as well as UNHCR and IOM to discuss operational updates, check progress and identify bottlenecks.

To address the shortcomings and follow up on a recommendation identified in the previous report, the EU Delegation proposed to Member States a revised version of the questions and answers (Q&A) document used by UNHCR to ensure that the information given to Syrian candidates on reception conditions and cultural, social and legal standards in EU Member States is comprehensive. The revised version of this document has already been endorsed by UNHCR as well as by a majority of Member States.

**Immediate follow up is needed in the following areas:**

- The Member States which have not yet resettled under the ongoing EU level schemes (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and those who have not reported any progress and are still far away from reaching their targets (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Portugal) should immediately step up their efforts to reach their commitments under the Conclusions of 20 July 2015;
- Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, which have received files from UNHCR under the EU-Turkey Statement already in the summer of 2016, should step up their efforts to complete the resettlement process from Turkey as soon as possible;
- Providing information to Syrian candidates under the EU-Turkey Statement about resettling countries should be further enhanced by Member States updating the revised questions and answers document used by UNHCR to enable the candidates to make an informed decision in order to decrease drop-outs in later stages of the resettlement procedure.

## **4 Way forward**

The European Heads of State or Government have repeatedly recognised the urgent need to address Europe's migratory situation and have called for further action to accelerate the implementation of the relocation scheme as an essential expression of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility towards Greece and Italy.

The set monthly targets of at least 3,000 relocations from Greece and at least 1,500 relocations from Italy are now very much achievable given the progress that is being made. Given current numbers in Greece and Italy, relocation of all those anticipated to be eligible is possible and feasible by September 2017. This should be our common goal to which all Member States should contribute fairly and proportionally. Member States should therefore

deploy the additional efforts and flexibility indicated in this and the previous report to meet this objective and ensure an increased rate of relocations before the next report in June 2017. The Commission stands ready to continue assisting Member States in coordinating these intensified efforts.

The majority of the Member States have reacted positively to the Commission's and the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union's calls to increase their efforts. However, a number Member States have not relocated a single person, with disregard to their legal obligations, or have only relocated a few. With September 2017 approaching, these Member States have little time left to comply with their obligations and contribute fairly and proportionally.<sup>16</sup> Other Member States have shown that it is possible and feasible to relocate large numbers in a short period of time if there is the will and determined action to do so.

The Commission therefore urges the Member States that have not relocated anyone, or have not pledged for Italy and Greece for almost a year, to start doing so immediately and within a month. If no action is taken, the Commission will specify in its next report in June 2017 its position on making use of its powers under the Treaties and in particular on the opening of infringement procedures.

In parallel, Member States should continue to deliver on their resettlement commitments, in particular, those which have not yet resettled anyone as well as those which are still below their set target should step up their efforts.

---

<sup>16</sup> As explained in the Tenth and Eleventh Relocation and Resettlement Reports, pursuant to the Council Decisions, Member States' legal obligations do not stop after September 2017. Therefore, the relocation procedure set out in those Decisions must still be carried out by the Member States for eligible applicants within a reasonable timeframe thereafter.