



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Jan HAMÁČEK
President of the
Poslanecká sněmovna
Sněmovní 4
CZ – 118 26 PRAGUE 1*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Poslanecká sněmovna for its Opinion concerning the Commission proposal for a Council Decision establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece {COM(2015) 286 final}.

The proposal, for the first time, triggers the emergency response mechanism under the Article 78(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and is part of the European Agenda on Migration proposed on 13 May 2015. The objective of this measure is to support those Member States which are confronted with exceptionally high migratory pressure, while at the same time ensuring the proper protection of applicants in clear need of it.

To this end, the Commission proposed a temporary relocation mechanism for 40 000 persons in need of protection that arrived in either Italy or Greece to be allocated between the Member States based on a distribution key. The purpose of the key was to determine, on the basis of objective criteria (i.e. Gross Domestic Product, size of population, unemployment rate and past numbers of asylum seekers and resettled refugees), the share of responsibility to be taken by each Member State.

As noted in the Commission's reply to the opinion of the Poslanecká sněmovna on the European Agenda on Migration {COM(2015) 240 final}, the Poslanecká sněmovna favours to maintain the voluntary approach to the relocation scheme.

The Commission welcomes that the both relocation decisions for 160 000 persons were formally adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on the 14 and 22 September 2015¹.

¹ Council Decision (EU) 2015/1523 of 14 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and of Greece
Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September 2015 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece

The Commission took note that the Czech Republic voted against on 22 September 2015 when the decision was adopted by qualified majority vote by the Justice and Home Affairs Council. In any case, both relocation schemes have now to be implemented in full and as a matter of urgency.

The Commission agrees that substantial efforts have to be made in tackling the root causes of irregular migration, including through preventive measures. The Commission presented a number of measures to implement the European Agenda on Migration on 27 May and 9 September 2015.

We would also like to draw your attention to the Communication "managing the refugee crisis" that was adopted on 23 September 2015 that sets out the key measures immediately required in terms of: (i) operational measures; (ii) budgetary support (iii) implementation of EU law and (iv) next legislative steps within the next six months, as well as the Commission's report adopted on 14 October 2015 on the state of play of the implementation of the priority actions under the European Agenda on Migration.

Addressing the refugee crisis and managing the migratory pressure on our external borders is the most pressing priority the Union faces today, and instability, war and poverty in our neighbourhood mean that this issue will need to remain at the top of the political agenda for some years to come.

The Commission hopes that this reply is useful to the Poslanecká sněmovna and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*