



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.11.2015
C(2015) 7998 final*

*Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát 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 Commission appreciates that the Senát acknowledges the need to provide solution to the current migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The proposal, for the first time, triggers the emergency response 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 relieve the asylum systems of those Member States which are confronted with exceptionally heavy migratory pressure, while at the same time ensuring proper protection of applicants in clear need.

To this end, the Commission proposed a temporary relocation mechanism for 40 000 persons in need of protection that arrive 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 Senát on the European Agenda of Migration {COM(2015) 240 final}, the Senát favours to maintain the voluntary approach to the relocation scheme.

The Commission welcomes that 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 JHA Council when the decision was adopted by qualified majority vote. In any case, both relocation schemes have now to be implemented in full and as a matter of urgency.

The Commission values the past and on-going active involvement of the Czech Republic in a number of initiatives related to migration, including the humanitarian aid to the countries of origin of migrants and the participation in the regional development and protection programmes, and welcomes the support of the Senát to extend the existing activities, including the voluntary efforts in resettling refugees.

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 in 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 the 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 the clarifications provided address the issues raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*