



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.03.2017
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Sejm for its Reasoned Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast) {COM(2016) 270 final}.

The Commission takes seriously the concerns expressed by the Sejm as regards the proposal's compliance with the subsidiarity principle. In the Commission's view, the large-scale, uncontrolled arrival of migrants and asylum seekers in 2015 has exposed structural weaknesses in the design and implementation of the Dublin arrangements. According to the current Dublin rules, the highest burden is on Member States of first irregular entry, and in 2015 we saw this on the ground. This development has demonstrated that solidarity between Member States cannot be solved by bilateral actions between Member States alone but requires an action at Union level.

In order to address the uneven distribution of asylum applicants among Member States and the overall shortcomings inherent in the Dublin system beyond mere short-term reactions in times of crisis, the proposal for the recast of the Dublin Regulation proposes improvements by establishing a more sustainable and fair system for determining the Member State responsible for asylum seekers in full respect of the overarching principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. According to the proposal, the basic approach of the Dublin Regulation that the Member State of first irregular entry is responsible will remain, while the Dublin procedures will be streamlined to discourage abuses and prevent secondary movements or 'asylum shopping'. The corrective allocation mechanism will only be triggered in situations of disproportionate pressure on Member States' asylum systems, to ensure that the situation is under control, uncontrolled secondary movements within Europe are avoided and that no Member State is left alone to bear a disproportionate burden.

The Commission is convinced that this proposal is necessary and proportionate to ensure the effectiveness of the Dublin system, in line with the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility. As this cannot be achieved on a national level, it is in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

*Mr Marek KUCHCIŃSKI
Marshal of the Sejm
Ul. Wiejska 4/6
PL – 00-902 WARSAW*

The proposals to reform the EU asylum policy shall be seen as one element of a comprehensive EU migration policy that also includes actions to protect more effectively the EU external borders, to reinforce our return policy and to strengthen our cooperation with third-countries.

The Commission also notes the Sejm's reservations relating to the reference key necessary to trigger the corrective allocation mechanism. The Commission opted for a simple distribution key based on the size of the population and the GDP in order to ensure that the capacity of a Member State to absorb a certain number of refugees and the absolute wealth of a country are reflected. The GDP is also indicative of the capacity of an economy to absorb and integrate refugees. Moreover, Member States receive financial support under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to develop their capacities to host and integrate refugees.

As regards the Sejm's concerns on financial solidarity, the Commission points out that this constitutes a different means for Member States to show solidarity in line with article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. As indicated in the proposal, Member States who choose not to participate in the allocation mechanism during a given year should instead contribute through other, financial, means. The amount of the solidarity contribution per applicant who would have been otherwise allocated to that Member State should, on the one hand, cover the costs of receiving asylum seekers during a number of years. On the other hand, there is also a dissuasive element, since the aim of the proposal is the full participation of the Member States to the fairness mechanism. In addition, the solidarity contribution can only be reviewed after the twelve-month period in order to reflect in full the factual situation of the given year.

Hoping that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Sejm, the Commission looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future. This proposal is now subject to the ordinary legislative procedure for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council. On 15 December 2016, the European Council came to the conclusion that "the effective application of the principles of responsibility and solidarity remains a shared objective. Sustained efforts over the past months to review the Common European Asylum System have shown some areas of convergence, while other areas require further work." In line with the conclusions, the European Council has requested the Maltese Presidency to initiate intensive bilateral discussions with Member States with the view to achieving convergence on the key elements of revision of the Dublin Regulation by the end of its term. The Commission supports this objective.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*