



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 4.8.2016
C(2016) 5193 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication on 'Next Operational Steps in EU-Turkey Cooperation in the Field of Migration' {COM(2016) 166}.

The Commission appreciates the Camera Deputaților's support for EU-Turkey cooperation in the field of migration. As the Commission has comprehensively reported in its two reports on the progress made in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (First Report {COM(2016) 231}, and Second Report {COM(2016) 349}), this cooperation has started to deliver results in spite of many challenges to which the Camera Deputaților also refers. In its Second Report, the Commission has been able to set out the further progress made in many of the areas highlighted by the Camera Deputaților, such as disbursement under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. However, this report concluded that the success achieved so far is fragile, and it is too soon to conclude that all aspects of the EU-Turkey Statement are fully functional and underlined that successful implementation depends mainly on the political determination of all sides to take the necessary actions.

In particular, the Commission agrees with many of the specific points highlighted by the Camera Deputaților: the need to distinguish clearly the position of those entitled to international protection, and of the victims of the Syrian crisis in particular; the need for solidarity in terms of substantial support for Greece and for full Member State participation in EU resettlement; and the recognition of the efforts made by Turkey in the reception of migrants and refugees.

The Second Report confirmed a sharp decrease in the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers crossing from Turkey into Greece, and the number of lives lost in the Aegean Sea has come down markedly. This demonstrates that the business model of smugglers can be broken. The Commission considers that addressing this core business model can disincentivise both small-scale operations and the powerful organisations to which the Camera Deputaților refers. The Commission will continue to provide enhanced coordination and support for the Greek and Turkish authorities, EU Agencies, international organisations and the Member States involved in order to consolidate this achievement and to maintain the

*Mr Florin IORDACHE
President of the Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

momentum. In this context, and as the Camera Deputaţilor also considers, it is important to return – in full compliance with EU and international rules – all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers whose applications have been declared inadmissible or unfounded on the basis of individual assessments. Also reinforcing resettlement processes in full compliance with EU and international rules ensuring that there is a legal safe pathway contributes in this context.

At the same time, as the Camera Deputaţilor notes, the gradual reduction of the irregular flows on the Eastern Mediterranean route risks increasing pressure on other routes, including the Black Sea. So far there is no substantial evidence that new routes are developing as a direct result of the EU-Turkey Statement, but the Commission is monitoring the situation closely with the European External Action Service and Frontex, including with regard to the Black Sea. Furthermore, the future European Border and Coast Guard Agency that should be operational as soon as possible will contribute towards managing efficiently the crossings and addressing migratory challenges and potential future threats at the external borders. As regards visa liberalisation, the Commission recognises that public opinion needs to see that liberalisation depends on the attainment of clear benchmarks. It will continue to support Turkey in the work that still needs to be done to fulfil the remaining benchmarks of the visa liberalisation roadmap.

Alongside measures to be taken by Greece and Turkey, the Commission considered in its Second Report that urgent attention should be given by Member States to consolidate resettlement efforts from Turkey to the EU and to swiftly finalise the decision-making process on the Commission's proposal of 21 March 2016 to use for resettlement purposes the 54,000 places originally foreseen for relocation. The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaţilor's support for progress on these two issues.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaţilor and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Věra Jourová

Member of the Commission