



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 07.07.2016
C(2016) 3923 final*

*The Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chair of the European Union
Select Committee
House of Lords
Palace of Westminster
UK – LONDON SW1A 0PW*

Dear Chairman,

The Commission would like to thank the House of Lords for its Opinion of 13 April 2016, sent in response to the Commission's reply to its earlier Opinion on the 'EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2015-2020' {COM(2015) 285 final}.

The Commission welcomes the favourable views expressed by the Committee as well as the clarifications offered in relation to the use of the term 'refugee crisis' in relation to the present crisis.

In its Communication of 6 April 2016 "Towards a reform of the Common European Asylum System and enhancing legal avenues to Europe"¹ the Commission announced its plans to work on a structured system for resettlement. To that end, building on existing initiatives, such as the Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey, the Commission will present a proposal for a structured resettlement system providing a common approach to safe and legal arrival in the Union for persons in need of international protection via resettlement. This is a direct demonstration of the EU's commitment to helping countries under the heaviest pressure.

The Commission takes note of the interest expressed by the House of Lords in relation to the evaluation of the Return Directive. As announced in the EU Action Plan on Return of 9 September 2015², the Commission is in the process of evaluating the state of the application of the Directive and in 2017 will issue a second report on its application. The report will, among other things, consider whether the revision of the Directive is necessary. As far as the interaction between this instrument and the proposal for a Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard³ is concerned, it should be noted that those EU Member States

¹ COM(2016) 197 final

² COM(2015) 453 final

³ COM(2015) 671 final

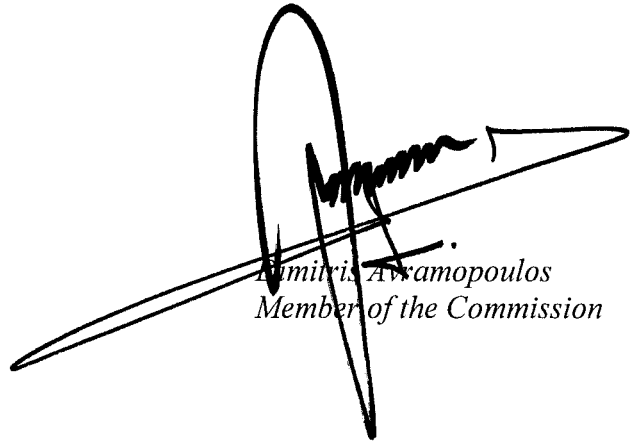
bound by the Return Directive need to comply with its provisions when participating in return operations conducted in the framework of a future European Border and Coast Guard. The Agency implements return decisions adopted by the competent national authorities, without a right of review of their relative merits.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the House of Lords and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

A stylized handwritten signature consisting of a large, sweeping horizontal line at the top, followed by a series of sharp, angular strokes that form a distinctive shape, and a long horizontal line extending to the right at the bottom.

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

A handwritten signature featuring a large, prominent loop at the top, followed by a series of smaller, more intricate strokes, and a long, sweeping horizontal line at the bottom that extends to the right.

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*