

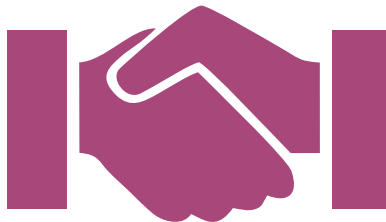
MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS

EU-TURKEY STATEMENT: PROGRESS REPORT JUNE 2016

A JOINT RESPONSE

On 18 March 2016 EU Heads of State or Government agreed to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU by breaking the business model of the smugglers and offering migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk. The aim is to restore a legal and orderly admission system for those entitled to international protection in line with EU and international law. In line with the EU-Turkey Statement from 18 March 2016, all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible will be returned to Turkey.

The implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement is delivering results: the number of irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greece has decreased sharply showing that the business model of smugglers can be broken. Most importantly, the number of lives lost in the Aegean Sea has come down markedly.



The Commission is assisting **Greece** with advice, expertise and support from the EU budget and by coordinating the support which is being provided by other Member States and EU agencies – via the EU Coordinator Maarten Verwey who is leading three teams in Brussels, Athens and Ankara.

The EU has provided unprecedented support to the Greek government in terms of logistics, materials and expertise. It has also facilitated contacts between the Greek and Turkish authorities who now exchange information on a regular basis; has promoted the coordination in the ongoing operations by Frontex and NATO, and has closely collaborated with UN agencies and international organisations and NGOs. This has led to a significant improvement in the exchange of information for search and rescue operations, and on migrant smuggling incidents, routes and methods.

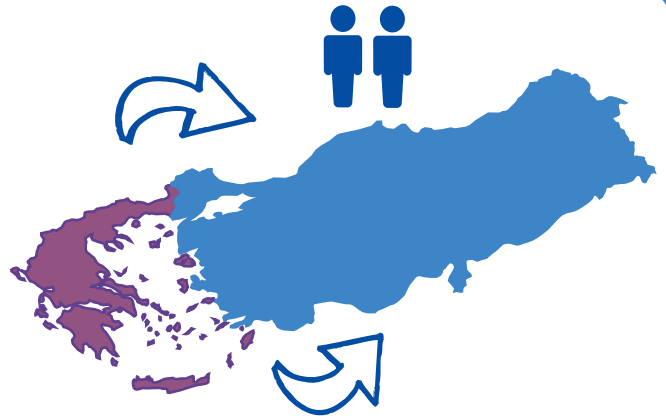
IRREGULAR ARRIVALS TO THE EU

In the month before the implementation of the Statement, around 1,740 migrants were crossing the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands every day. By contrast, between 1 May and 15 June, the average daily number of arrivals was 47.

RETURN OF ALL NEW IRREGULAR MIGRANTS FROM GREECE TO TURKEY

Since 20 March, when the Statement became operational, a total of 468 persons who entered Greece irregularly and did not apply for asylum have been returned to Turkey. In total, 1,552 irregular migrants have been returned from Greece to Turkey in the course of 2016.

All asylum applications are treated on a case-by-case basis. The implementation of the Statement is carried out strictly in accordance with the requirements of EU and international law and in full respect of the principle of *non-refoulement*.



LEGAL STEPS

The **Turkish authorities** provided assurances that all returned Syrians will be granted temporary protection upon return and that each non-Syrian who seeks international protection will enjoy protection from refoulement in line with international standards. Turkey has also adopted a Regulation on work permits for international protection applicants and international protection status holders. In addition, Turkey allowed the EU to monitor regularly the situation of Syrians and non-Syrians returned to Turkey by authorising access to refugee camps and removal centres. Furthermore, Turkey started implementing a roadmap aimed at reducing the backlog of pending applications for international protection by non-Syrians.

The Turkish Parliament approved the entry into force of the third country nationals' provisions of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement as of 1 June.

The **Greek authorities** have agreed to further amend their legislation to set up the new Appeal Authority and the new Appeal Committees responsible for the judicial review of decisions on applications for international protection taken by the Greek Asylum Service. The legislative amendment concerning the introduction of the new Appeals Authority was adopted by the Hellenic Parliament on 16 June.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To support the Greek authorities as well as international organisations and NGOs operating in Greece in managing the refugee and humanitarian crisis, the Commission has awarded over €262 million in emergency assistance since the beginning of 2015 - making Greece the biggest beneficiary of Home Affairs funds. The emergency funding comes on top of the €509 million already allocated to Greece under the national programmes for 2014-2020 (€294,5 million from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund and €214,7 million from the Internal Security Fund).

Greece has also been awarded €83 million to improve conditions for refugees in Greece from the new Emergency support instrument.

KEY CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

Greece, with the coordinated support of the EU and its Member States, should:

- Increase its capacity to deal with asylum applications and appeals on an individual basis and in the timeliest manner, notably through the use of the safe third country concept.
- Take the necessary measures to ensure the rapid readmission to Turkey of irregular migrants who arrived after 20 March 2016.
- Increase reception capacity on the islands and transfer to the mainland those applicants whose asylum applications have been found to be admissible.
- Significantly enhance the coordination, provision of services and security at the Greek reception centres in the hotspots.
- Make best use of further emergency assistance to Greece, while ensuring complementarity with actions funded through the national programmes, as well as reinforcing the operational budget of EASO.

“ONE FOR ONE” RESETTLEMENT FROM TURKEY TO THE EU

A total of 711 Syrians have so far been resettled from Turkey to the EU. At this point in time, the number of Syrians resettled substantially exceeds the numbers returned under the EU-Turkey Statement.

LEGAL STEPS

Fast-Track Standard Operating Procedures to facilitate the resettlement process were agreed and formalised. Legislative discussions have continued on the Commission’s proposal from 21 March to make the 54,000 places initially foreseen for relocation available for the purpose of legally admitting Syrians from Turkey to the EU through resettlement, humanitarian admission or other legal pathways, such as humanitarian visas, scholarships or family reunification schemes.

OPERATIONAL STEPS

The Commission and the EU Delegation set up a resettlement team to coordinate and assist Member States’ operations and liaise with IOM, UNHCR and the Turkish authorities. It provides information regarding resettlement candidates and helps to conduct interviews with them.



A total of 711 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey to the EU.

KEY CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

- Continue to build up a substantial number of resettlements from Turkey to the EU.
- Adopt the proposed decision to use for resettlement 54,000 places originally foreseen for relocation.
- Ensure a smooth running of the substantially increased resettlement operations via coordination on the ground in Ankara.

VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN ADMISSION SCHEME

The Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey will be activated once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced. The Standard Operating Procedures for the Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme, developed in the Council in cooperation with the Commission, EASO, UNHCR and IOM, are being negotiated with Turkey.

VISA LIBERALISATION



Of the 72 benchmarks, 65 are fulfilled. The seven outstanding benchmarks include two benchmarks for which a longer timeframe for implementation is required.

Remaining five benchmarks:

- Adoption of measures to prevent corruption ensuring effective follow-up to the recommendations issued by the Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO);
- Alignment of legislation on personal data protection with EU standards;
- Conclusion of an operational cooperation agreement with Europol;
- Offering effective judicial cooperation in criminal matters to all EU Member States;
- Revision of legislation and practices on terrorism in line with European standards notably by better aligning the definition of terrorism in order to narrow the scope of the definition and by introducing a criterion of proportionality.

The two benchmarks which need more time to be implemented are:

- Upgrading the existing biometric passport so as to include security features in line with the latest EU standards;
- Full implementation of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement including the provisions regarding readmission of third country nationals.

THE FACILITY FOR REFUGEES IN TURKEY

The Facility has a **budget of €3 billion for 2016-2017**. This is made up of €1 billion from the EU budget, and €2 billion from the EU Member States. All Member States have sent in their contribution certificates for the €2 billion they pledged. The Facility is therefore now fully operational. The Facility should focus on six priority areas: (1) humanitarian assistance, (2) migration management, (3) education, (4) health, (5) municipal infrastructure and (6) socio-economic support.

Of the overall €3 billion, **€740 million has so far been allocated in total**, for both humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance. Of the €740 million allocated, €150 million has been contracted. Of these €150 million contracted, €105 million has been disbursed so far.

KEY CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

- Ensure the full implementation of the projects already launched to provide food and education, the special measure supporting returned migrants and the exceptional measure to strengthen the Turkish Coast Guard search and rescue capability.
- Implement the Humanitarian Implementation Plan adopted on 3 June 2016.
- Prepare and adopt the special measures on education and health and on municipal and social infrastructure and socio-economic support, as well as the top-up of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, by the end of July 2016.
- Implement five additional projects funded (€84 million) under the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis by summer 2016.
- Programme, prepare and adopt additional interventions to be funded under the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis to cover education, health, and other targeted areas such as vocational training and labour market access.
- Organise the third Steering Committee on 30 June 2016.

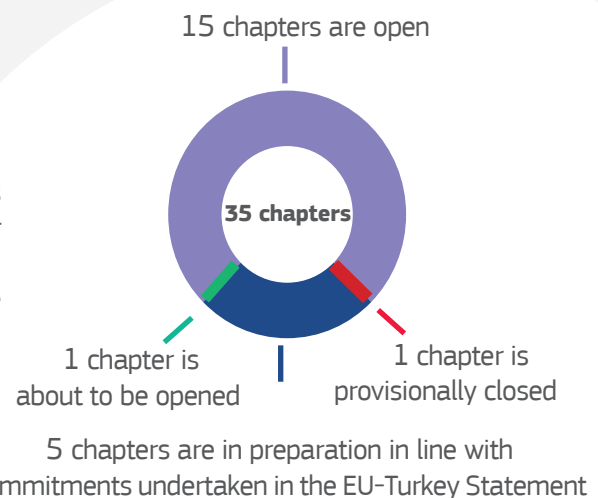
Further information is available on the **Facility website** at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/migration/index_en.htm

UPGRADING THE CUSTOMS UNION

The Commission is advancing in the preparation of an Impact Assessment and will finalise an Impact Assessment report in October 2016 also drawing upon an external study currently under way. Draft negotiating directives are expected to be prepared for adoption by the Commission by the end of 2016 and tabled to the Council.

ACCESSION PROCESS

- 15 chapters are open
- Chapter 25 (Science and Research) is provisionally closed
- One chapter is about to be opened: Work is progressing in the Council on Chapter 33 (financial and budgetary provisions). Council's examination is coming to an end which should enable the timely opening of the chapter before the end of June.
- Five chapters are in preparation in line with commitments undertaken in the EU-Turkey Statement, namely:
 - Chapter 15 (Energy).
 - Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) and Chapter 24 (Justice, freedom and security).
 - Chapter 26 (Education and culture).
 - Chapter 31 (Foreign, security and defence policy).



HUMANITARIAN CONDITIONS INSIDE SYRIA

The EU and Turkey have both continued to deploy substantial resources for the humanitarian response in Syria and have worked together to promote full and unimpeded access throughout Syria. The EU will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to people across Syria, and has allocated an initial €140 million for life-saving activities for 2016, almost half of which has already been contracted. This funding will support sectors such as health, hygiene, protection and first line response to quickly respond to emergencies and new displacements, with continued priority to besieged, hard-to-reach and prone to displacement areas.