



MANAGING THE REFUGEE CRISIS

GREECE: STATE OF PLAY REPORT

Effectively managing the pressure of migratory flows on some parts of the shared external Schengen border requires both responsibility and solidarity on the part of all Member States. It is of crucial importance that two key measures are fully implemented: the 'hotspot' approach and the relocation scheme – with the fingerprinting of all migrants, the prompt selection and relocation of asylum applicants and establishment of adequate reception capacities. The other essential component is action to secure swift return, voluntary or forced, of people not in need of international protection and who do not therefore qualify for relocation.

Over 700,000 people have arrived in Greece since the beginning of the year. The scale is immense and the Commission is working very closely with the Greek authorities to assist them in this challenge.



A dedicated Commission team working under the leadership of the Commission's Director-General of the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) has been on the ground for months, working hand in hand with the Greek authorities to accelerate access to emergency funding, improve the coordination between the various actors, address administrative bottlenecks and facilitate knowledge sharing on border management and relocation.

The Commission team has played a key role in the launch of the UNHCR rental scheme, which took place on 14 December, to provide 20,000 reception places for asylum seekers in Greece.



HOTSPOTS



What has been done

- 5 hotspots identified
- 1 functional hotspot in Lesvos
- Hotspot coordinators appointed for every island
- 31 team leaders deployed to manage EU agency support teams
- 293 Frontex agents deployed in the hotspots, 213 outside hotspot areas
- 46 fingerprinting machines deployed

What remains to be done

- Complete construction of the 4 remaining hotspots
- Deploy an additional 165 Frontex agents
- Update IT systems and deploy an additional 30 fingerprinting machines
- Systematically fingerprint migrants and enter data in central Eurodac system

RECEPTION CAPACITY

What has been done

- Launch of the UNHCR rental scheme for 20,000 reception places in Greece through Commission financing of €80 million and a further 7,000 places in the hotspots through a rent subsidy scheme
- Expansion of Eleonas site by 500-700 places with Council of Europe Development Bank
- Construction started of 4,500 additional places in Lesbos, Leros and Kos
- EU Civil Protection Mechanism activated

What remains to be done

- Complete the construction of all 7,000 places for all five hotspot islands
- Member States to make available necessary experts to ensure full roll-out of the hotspots
- Continue to increase reception capacity in line with the Western Balkans Leaders' meeting commitments
- Member States to complete contributions via the Civil Protection Mechanism



RELOCATION

What has been done

- 64 people relocated to other EU Member States
- 297 relocation candidates identified
- 9 Member States have made 305 places available
- 8 EASO mobile units on the islands
- IOM entrusted with the operational aspects of the relocation program

What remains to be done

- Increase the capacity to register and process asylum applications
- Greek Asylum service to hire additional staff
- Member States to substantially reduce the response time to process relocation applications
- Member states to substantially increase their pledges for relocation places

RETURN

What has been done

- 16,131 forced returns and 3,460 assisted voluntary returns in 2015
- 5,400 detention places are available to carry out returns
- Resumption of Assisted Voluntary Return Programme through IOM with support of €2.5 million in EU funding

What remains to be done

- Develop a clear strategy for forced returns identifying priority third countries
- Step up forced as well as voluntary returns
- Improve conditions in the detention centres
- Commission to step up engagement with third countries on readmission

IMPROVING BORDER MANAGEMENT

What has been done

- Frontex deployment launched in Idomeni region
- EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on migration management
- Activation of the Rapid Border Intervention Team (RABIT) in the Aegean islands

What remains to be done

- Member States to pledge staff and equipment to ensure Frontex operations can be carried out

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Commission has provided **€27.8 million** in emergency funding
- Commission is providing **€474 million** for migration and border management from 2014-20 to facilitate reception, returns, and relocation in Greece.

