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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL**

**Third report on relocation and resettlement**

# 1 Introduction

*The Third Report on Relocation and Resettlement provides an updated state of play since the last report of 12 April<sup>1</sup> and assesses the actions undertaken by all relevant stakeholders from 12 April 2016 until 13 May (the reporting period) to deliver on the recommendations made to accelerate the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes.*

*Since 12 April 2016, 2,581 people<sup>2</sup> have arrived in Greece. This represents a clear decrease (75% reduction compared to the period covered in the previous report), while in the mainland, the situation has remained largely unchanged. With the closure of the border between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, around 46,000 persons still remain in mainland Greece<sup>3</sup> and, according to estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),<sup>4</sup> 65% of those belong to one of the nationalities eligible for relocation. In Italy, 10,242 people<sup>5</sup> have arrived since 12 April, showing a trend similar to the same period in 2015. An increased number of arrivals of Eritreans, including unaccompanied minors, has been reported in the past weeks.*

*Overall, progress on relocation since the Second Report on Relocation and Resettlement has been unsatisfactory. The Commission had set a target to relocate at least 20,000 persons by mid-May in its First Report on Relocation and Resettlement. The reality falls well short of this target. Only 355 additional persons have been relocated during the reporting period bringing the total number of persons relocated so far to 1,500 (909 from Greece and 591 from Italy). It is largely the same Member States as in the previous report that have continued to increase their relocation efforts, particularly in Greece whereas the number of relocation transfers in Italy remain low.*

*As regards resettlement, 6,321 people have been resettled so far of the agreed 22,504 under the July scheme mainly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. With the agreed actions set out in the EU-Turkey Statement only starting to be applied from 4 April,<sup>6</sup> 177 persons have been resettled from Turkey to the EU under the 1:1 mechanism out of which 98 since the last report.*

## 2 Relocation

### 2.1 Actions by the Member States of relocation

From 12 April until 13 May, only 355 additional persons were relocated, 294 from Greece (to France, the Netherlands, Latvia, Romania, Finland, Bulgaria, Malta, Czech Republic, Estonia

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2016) 222 final.

<sup>2</sup> Irregular arrivals- Source Frontex, as reported by Greece in the frame of the Western Balkans daily report.

<sup>3</sup> Source Greece authorities and UNHCR.

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83>.

<sup>5</sup> The number of irregular arrivals in Italy through sea borders as reported in JORA (Joint Operations Reporting Applications) and collected in the frame of the Joint Operation Triton 2016. Data covering irregular entries between 1 May and 13 May (3,550 people) may be subject to changes after validation.

<sup>6</sup> SN 38/16, 18.03.2016

and Slovenia)<sup>7</sup> and 61 from Italy (to Finland, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland).<sup>8</sup> During this period, the first relocation transfers to Switzerland and Slovenia took place. An additional 307 relocation transfers are planned until the end of May from Greece<sup>9</sup> and 137 from Italy.<sup>10</sup>

**Actions to address the limited number of pledges:** 11 Member States (Belgium, Croatia – its first pledge<sup>11</sup> - Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia)<sup>12</sup> have submitted 1,220 new indications of readiness to relocate swiftly applicants for international protection (the "formal pledges"). The total number of formal pledges by Member States of relocation amounts to 5,736 (1,658 to Italy and 4,078 to Greece).

Austria,<sup>13</sup> Hungary and Slovakia have still not submitted any pledge. In addition, a number of Member States (Germany and Poland) are not yet respecting the obligation under the Council Decision to indicate, every three months, the number of applicants who can be relocated swiftly to their territory. Finally, most Member States are so far not submitting pledges on a scale consistent with their allocation for the entire period covered by the decisions (e.g., Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain have pledged only 5% or less of their allocation).

**Actions to speed up the response time to relocation requests:** some Member States (Finland, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia) have made additional efforts to shorten the response time to relocation requests and meet the two-week target.

On the other hand, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Estonia continue rejecting relocation requests, either without providing substantiated reasons or on grounds other than those specified in the Council Decisions on relocation. In addition, Poland continues to apply a *de facto* suspension of the relocation procedure.<sup>14</sup>

**Actions to address challenges related to the relocation of vulnerable applicants, including unaccompanied minors:** According to latest Eurostat data, almost 90,000 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in the EU in 2015. Afghan (51% of the total number of unaccompanied minors), Syrian (16%) and Eritrean (6%) were the three main nationalities of

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<sup>7</sup> 120 to France, 94 to the Netherlands, 15 to Latvia, 14 to Romania, 34 to Finland, 2 to Bulgaria, 5 to Malta, 4 to the Czech Republic, 12 to Estonia and 28 to Slovenia.

<sup>8</sup> 13 to Finland, 2 to Latvia, 30 to Portugal, 6 to Romania and 10 to Switzerland.

<sup>9</sup> 38 to Finland (foreseen for 16 May), 166 for Portugal (including 26 on 17 May), 6 to Malta, 77 to Luxembourg and 20 to Belgium.

<sup>10</sup> 8 to Cyprus, 10 to Slovenia, 34 to Portugal, 24 to Spain, 32 to Finland, 5 to Belgium and 24 to Switzerland.

<sup>11</sup> During the reporting period, Croatia indicated its willingness to start relocating in July 20 people (10 for Italy and 10 for Greece). Therefore, although an official pledge it will only be active from July onwards.

<sup>12</sup> Estonia 20 for Greece, Finland 270 for Greece and 30 for Italy, France 400 for Greece, Ireland 40 for Greece, Latvia 15 for Greece, Lithuania 140 for Greece, the Netherlands 100 for Greece and 25 for Italy and Slovenia 30 for Greece.

<sup>13</sup> Austria benefits from a temporary suspension of the relocation of up to 30 % of applicants allocated to Austria under Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601. As a consequence Austria has a one year suspension relating to the relocation of 1,065 persons. However, the normal legal obligations apply to Austria in respect of the relocation of the remaining allocations, so pledges and relocations are nevertheless expected.

<sup>14</sup> In early April Poland suspended the processing of 73 relocation requests that the Greek Asylum Service sent to Poland on the basis of a pledge that Poland submitted on 16 December 2015 thus *de facto* freezing the relocation procedure three and a half months after the submission of the pledge. The same applies to requests from Italy.

asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors in the EU in 2015.<sup>15</sup> The trend has continued in 2016. 1,824 unaccompanied minors arrived in Italy between 1 and 30 April.<sup>16</sup> In Greece, although it is not possible to know the number of arrivals during the same period, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) reports that 1,609 unaccompanied minors have been referred to EKKA for accommodation since the beginning of 2016. In line with the Council Decisions on relocation, Member States should prioritise the relocation of unaccompanied minors arriving in the EU. Since 12 April, no unaccompanied minor has been relocated. However, 8 unaccompanied minors are expected to be relocated from Greece to Finland, one to Portugal and two to Luxembourg in the coming weeks.<sup>17</sup> During the reporting period, Malta and Belgium have followed the Commission's call to increase places for unaccompanied minors. As part of its new pledge to Greece and Italy, Malta has offered 12 places for this category of vulnerable applicants (six for Italy and six for Greece). As part of its new pledge to Greece, Belgium has offered 10 places for this category of vulnerable applicants.

**Actions to increase migrants' acceptability and trust in the scheme and avoid withdrawals:** Based on the template and guidance previously developed by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) – which set out the main elements to be included in the pre-departure information to be provided by the Member States – Romania has been the first country to provide pre-departure information based on the template.

**Actions to reinforce EASO's capacity to support Italy and Greece:** EASO's most recent call for experts for Italy requested 42 experts for the period from 15 April 2016 until 17 June 2016. So far only 27 experts (from Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, Romania and the UK) have been offered (in addition to another six expected deployments). More experts are needed to cover current operational needs in Italy, and a further increase in needs can be anticipated given the likelihood of higher arrivals in the summer period.

On 21 April, EASO launched a 5<sup>th</sup> call for experts to support the relocation scheme in Greece, requesting a minimum 62 experts. So far, only 26 experts have been nominated by the Member States (Finland, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden) for deployment. EASO is preparing a substantial increase of support to the registration process to accommodate the mass pre-registration exercise planned by Greece, also involving Member State experts.

## 2.2 Actions by Greece and Italy, including highlights from the roadmaps

- *Greece*

**Actions to make the hotspots fully operational:** All hotspots are currently operational with the exception of Kos.

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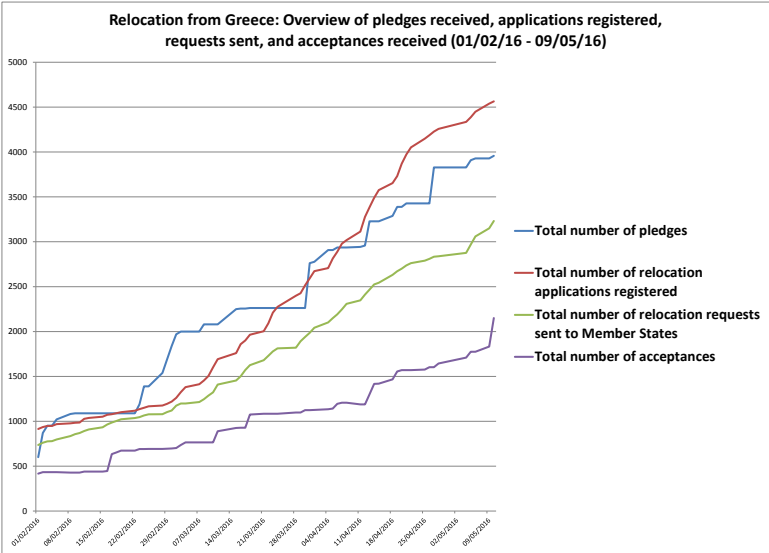
<sup>15</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-press-releases/-/3-02052016-AP>.

<sup>16</sup> Source Italian Minister of the Interior.

<sup>17</sup> In total 21 unaccompanied minors have been relocated so far (20 to Finland and 1 to the Netherlands) from Greece and none from Italy.

**Action to accelerate the registration of migrants:** The Greek Asylum Service in close cooperation with UNHCR and EASO is planning to carry out a mass pre-registration exercise in three phases in the coming months targeting in its first phase about 35,000 people present in official reception sites in mainland Greece. The exercise will help the Greek Asylum Service's efforts to improve the identification of the majority of irregular migrants who may be in need of international protection in the mainland (including details on nationality, age, and vulnerability). The exercise is expected to facilitate and accelerate the full registration of applications for international protection.

**Actions to improve the registration capacity of the Greek Asylum Service:** The capacity of the Greek Asylum Service to process relocation requests has increased noticeably during the past month with the creation of mixed teams of Greek Asylum Service registration officers and EASO registration experts in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Alexandroupoli. This capacity is expected to further increase in the coming weeks. The Greek Asylum Service has recently hired 21 additional officers for the processing of relocation requests. This increase will be matched with the deployment of an equivalent number of additional EASO experts. A new server for the Dublin Unit of the Asylum Service has been procured and delivered by EASO, which will result in a substantial increase in the pace of sending relocation requests to Member States, as the new server can support more users at the same time.



Overall, as shown in the graph, the capacity of the Greek Asylum System to register and submit relocation requests has been continuously increasing. While the increase in the number of registrations has been matched by a similar increase in the number of pledges, the capacity to submit relocation requests is rising at a much faster pace than the replies by Member States of relocation. This difference in pace can become a significant bottleneck in the follow-up to the mass pre-

registration exercise.

**Actions to improve the coordination and to speed up the response time to relocation requests:** the Standard Operating Procedures for hotspots still need to be adopted to take into account the EU-Turkey Statement. A Relocation Protocol was elaborated jointly by the Commission, the Greek Asylum Service, UNHCR, EASO and IOM with the aim to ensure a swift and speedy implementation of the relocation procedure. The Protocol describes the task of each actor and establishes specific timeframes for each step in the relocation workflow, including the response time by Member States of relocation to speed up relocation. The Protocol was discussed with the Member States' Liaison Officers in Athens on 26 April. It now needs to be endorsed as a matter of urgency, at the latest in the next Liaison Officers meeting in Athens at the beginning of June.

**Actions to improve the reception capacity in Greece:** As of 13 May, the total reception capacity in Greece stands at 47,400 places. Out of the 20,000 places committed under the rental scheme by the UNHCR in December 2015, as of 11 May, 5,368 places were available including 2,514 places in hotels/entire buildings, 1,789 places in apartments, 875 places in the Lagadikia centre, 120 places in host families, and 70 places in dedicated facilities for unaccompanied minors. Under this scheme, the UNHCR is planning to make a total of 6,000 places available in relocation centres which will accommodate all fully registered relocation applicants. As of 13 May, 875 places were already available in the Lagadikia centre and 723 migrants were already accommodated. Discussions are ongoing between the UNHCR and the Greek authorities regarding the provision of more sites for the construction of dedicated relocation centres, notably in the Attica region.

The UNHCR has committed to ensure the transport of all applicants for international protection whose relocation applications have been accepted by Member States of relocation to the facilities run with UNHCR support in Athens for the pre-departure phase. These developments are expected to substantially improve the efficiency of the relocation workflow.

- *Italy*

**Actions to make the hotspots fully operational:** Currently the hotspots of Pozzallo, Lampedusa, Trapani and Taranto are operational. In Pozzallo, additional works are needed to further improve the functionality and working conditions of the hotspot. In Taranto, the fencing around the facility should be heightened and air conditioning installed to ensure an orderly management of the migration flows in the facility. Due to peaks in the number of arrivals during the past days, it has become clear that the available capacity of the operational hotspots would not be sufficient for the summer months. As a consequence, Italy has identified further hotspots locations that should be opened in the course of the summer.

Given that a large number of disembarkations take place outside the current hotspots areas, the Italian authorities should speed up the setting up of mobile hotspots. To this end, the Italian authorities are finalising the setting up of mobile hotspots that should become operational before the summer. Italian authorities are currently discussing with Frontex the procurement and deployment of some installations in the ports concerned. In addition, Standard Operating Procedures for the hotspots have been finalised and are about to be circulated to the relevant local authorities and stakeholders.

**Actions to improve coordination:** The new premises of the EU Regional Task Force (EURTF) in Catania are operational since 27 April 2016. In cooperation with the Italian Ministry of the Interior, EASO is preparing a capacity-building session on relocation to be provided to operators at the local level (*questure* and *prefecture*), contributing to the efficient processing of relocation cases and consistent practice. Overall, it is further recommended to appoint a focal point for each hotspot to act as counterpart for the agencies involved in the operations and to prepare contingency plans in each hotspot for additional shifts and capacity to register migrants for the summer months.

**Actions to improve the reception and processing capacities in Italy:** As part of the effort to streamline relocation and ensure additional spaces are available in the dedicated regional Hubs, the Ministry of the Interior is moving migrants from such centres and refurbishing additional ones. Availability of second level reception capacity both for relocation applicants and for normal asylum seekers could be challenging during the summer months and may

become an obstacle to the swift functioning of the hotspots. The process to launch a tendering procedure for the procurement of flights to transport migrants on the Italian territory from the points of arrival should be concluded as quickly as possible.

**Actions to address challenges related to the relocation of vulnerable applicants and unaccompanied minors:** Further meetings have taken place with the Ministry of the Interior on the establishment of procedures to relocate unaccompanied minors but these are not yet concluded. Dedicated pilot projects to ensure age assessment capabilities in selected hotspots should start in the coming weeks. Additional capacity to treat victims of torture and trafficking is also recommended to ensure their appropriate accommodation.

**Actions to increase migrants' acceptability and trust in the scheme and avoiding withdrawals:** To prevent withdrawals and build a positive image for relocation among target groups, at the request of the Italian authorities, EASO, in cooperation with the Member States of relocation, is collecting testimonies from people successfully relocated from Italy to share their good experience with other applicants to be relocated. First video materials were already obtained from Latvia and Romania and will be used as part of pre-departure information. Several stakeholders during recent visits on the ground have confirmed a more open attitude to relocation by migrants of eligible nationalities.

## 2.3 Actions by the Commission and EU agencies

- *European Commission*

The Commission has continued supporting Italy and Greece on the ground. This has included support to developing the Relocation Protocol in Greece and organising Liaison Officers meetings in both countries. The Commission is planning specific meetings to address the bottlenecks in the relocation of unaccompanied minors.

The Commission is also working with the Dutch Presidency of the Council, and in cooperation with the Italian and Greek authorities, to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the First Relocation Report on Relocation and Resettlement and the two Presidency papers,<sup>18</sup> including the development of a questionnaire to identify Member States' security concerns and to find ways to address them.

To support the Greek authorities as well as international organisations and NGOs operating in Greece in their work to manage the refugee crisis, the Commission awarded over EUR 56 million in emergency assistance over the reporting period. With this, the total emergency funding to Greece amounts to EUR 237 since beginning of 2015.

Finally, as part of its monitoring of the implementation of the Council Decisions on relocation, the Commission raised and will continue to raise concerns with those Member States that so far have not complied with their obligations

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<sup>18</sup> To support Member States in stepping up their relocation efforts, the Dutch Presidency of the Council has developed two recommendation papers, one targeting hotspots and relocation and another on security checks. The recommendations are largely in line with those made by the Commission in its First Report on Relocation and Resettlement.

- *European Asylum Support Office*

**Actions to speed up the relocation process and increase the registration capacity of the Greek Asylum Service:** EASO currently has 33 experts, 8 interpreters and 3 EASO staff deployed to support the relocation procedure in Greece. EASO has been implementing a pilot registration in Greece. The pilot has been a success having doubled the registration capacity of some of the regional offices of the Greek Asylum Service (for example, in Thessaloniki the registration capacity went from 25 cases per day to 50 cases per day).

**Lessons learned from EASO's pilot**

1. The re-organisation of the tasks within the registration process can significantly increase efficiency;
2. Mixed teams (Greek Asylum Service officers, EASO experts and interpreters) improve the efficiency of the process. For teams to be stable, EASO experts and interpreters need to be deployed at least for 6 weeks to maximise the resources (reduce training time);
3. Coordinators from EASO and the Greek Asylum Service facilitate the distribution/organisation of tasks;
4. Back-up EASO expertise would be needed also to follow up on more sensitive cases.

EASO will also support the mass pre-registration exercise in Greece through the deployment of four experts in every team and will take part in the mass information campaign preceding the pre-registration exercise. EASO will also increase its support to the registration by the Greek Asylum Service to up to 70 experts after the completion of the pre-registration exercise. The capacity of the subsequent steps of the relocation procedure will have to be enlarged in a similar way to avoid creating bottlenecks further down the procedure.

In Italy, EASO asylum support teams continue to apply a flexible approach thanks to the deployment of mobile teams which can be sent to various locations used for disembarkation. In addition, other deployments are swiftly adapted according to the continuously changing needs. Since the beginning of May, one EASO expert and one cultural mediator have been deployed in the new registration hub in Crotona, to ensure timely registration of new arrivals eligible for relocation. In parallel, deployments in Milan were discontinued due to the change in needs.

### **3 Resettlement**

Based on the information received from the participating States 6,321 people have been resettled in the period until 13 May 2016 in the framework of the resettlement scheme of 20 July 2015 to 16 resettling States (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). A majority of States participating in the scheme indicated that their resettlement efforts were primarily, but not exclusively, directed at Syrians staying in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

The number of resettlements from Turkey continues to increase as Member States finalise their assessments of files referred to them by Turkey via UNHCR. Since 4 April 2016, 177 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey under the resettlement part of the 1:1 scheme.



Sweden has received the largest number 55, followed by Germany 54, the Netherlands 52, Finland 11 and Lithuania 5. Another 723 persons have already been approved and are waiting to be transferred to 7 different EU Member States.

In total 19 Member States and one Associated State have indicated that, for the time being, almost 12,200 places have been earmarked for resettlements from Turkey. Of these, almost 1,900 places are currently expected to be filled between May and July 2016, depending on the number of Syrians returned from Greece.

In parallel, the European Commission has facilitated discussions between EU Member States and Associated States, Turkey, UNHCR and EASO, to finalise fast-track Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which define the division of responsibilities between the different actors involved. The SOPs were finally endorsed through an exchange of letters by the EU Member States, Associated States and Turkey on 12 May 2016.

Close consultations also continue in Ankara, Brussels and Geneva on how to further coordinate operations, streamline procedures and optimise resources to ensure a sufficiently fast and efficient resettlement process to meet the requirements of the 1:1 scheme, while taking into account the needs of individual candidates. For this purpose, the Commission has set up an EU Resettlement Team in the EU Delegation in Ankara. Weekly meetings are being organised with EU Member States and Associated States. It has also been agreed that technical level meetings between the EU Resettlement Team and the Turkish Directorate General for Migration Management will be held on a weekly basis. This allows information gathering and comparing notes on specific challenges. It also helps to provide specific support to Member States with little or no experience in resettlement. Coordination is also ensured with UNHCR and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) representatives. In particular, work has continued on agreeing on a harmonised set of information about resettlement candidates to be submitted by UNHCR to individual Member States, on a set of standard resettlement services offered by IOM and on the possibilities to arrange shared facilities that Member States can use for their selection missions to Ankara (interview rooms etc.).

The Council has, at the level of COREPER, endorsed the proposal tabled by the Commission on 21 March 2016 to make available further places for resettlement or other forms of legal admission from Turkey by amending Council Decision (EU) 2015/1601 of 22 September to relocate applicants for international protection from Italy and Greece.<sup>19</sup> The Opinion of the European Parliament on the Decision is pending.

## **4 Way forward**

Greece is facing a humanitarian crisis that requires a quick and full implementation of the obligations assumed by Member States in the Council Decisions on relocation. As for Italy, although the numbers of people available for relocation has not yet seen a rapid increase, established seasonal patterns of migration point to the strong likelihood of an increase in the number of arrivals.

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<sup>19</sup> COM(2016) 171 final.

European Council Conclusions<sup>20</sup> have recognised the urgency of the situation and called for an acceleration of relocation. The calls made by the Heads of State or Government must be matched with determined action by the competent national services on the ground.

The results achieved so far have not measured up to these calls. The Commission considered in its First Report on Relocation and Resettlement that at least 6,000 relocations should be completed by 16 April, and 20,000 by 16 May. The Commission continues to believe that this rate of relocation can be reached quickly if all stakeholders, particularly the Member States of relocation, show willingness in making relocation work and act together swiftly.

Steps are underway to accelerate the process. Italy is taking positive steps in view of enhancing the capacity needed to cope with likely increase in the number of arrivals. Greece is planning a mass, rapid pre-registration exercise that will accelerate the identification and full registration of relocation applicants. After this mass pre-registration exercise, a significant number of asylum seekers will be ready to be relocated within the following months. All partners on the ground, including IOM, EASO, UNHCR and the Commission are increasing their efforts and financial support to ensure the success of the mass pre-registration exercise and its follow-up.

Member States should plan accordingly and provide an adequate response by increasing the number of pledges and reducing the response time to relocation requests (including limiting additional security checks to only specific and duly justified cases). Greece and Italy will also need additional support from Member States to deploy EASO experts to increase the registration capacity in the next months. The Commission urges Member States to fully comply with their obligations under the Council Decisions on relocation, and particularly calls on Member States with large allocations to engage more actively in relocation and pledge accordingly to the size of their allocation.

For its part, Greece should fully invest in ensuring the success of the pre-registration exercise and making sure that all relocation centres foreseen are open and operational. So far only Lagadikia relocation centre, near Thessaloniki, is open. The two remaining relocation centres, particularly for Athens, should be completed as soon as possible and at the latest by the time of next month's report.

Italy should continue stepping up its hotspots capacity in order to be able to deal with the expected seasonal peak over in the summer months. Italy should also establish specific procedures allowing for the relocation of unaccompanied minors.

More generally, additional efforts are also needed from all actors to step up the relocation of unaccompanied minors, in particular to provide child-friendly information about the relocation procedure, provide for additional places for unaccompanied minors in the official pledges.

The Commission will continue monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and targets included in the First Report on Relocation and Resettlement through this monthly reporting exercise and reserves the right to take action where Member States are not complying with their obligations.

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<sup>20</sup> European Council Conclusions of 7 March 2016. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/07-eu-turkey-meeting-statement/>

In parallel, Member States need to continue delivering on their resettlement commitments, including as part of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. In June, the Commission will report on the implementation of the Statement, including the resettlement efforts carried out as part of it.