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ANNEX 2

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

**Managing the refugees crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures
under the European Agenda on Migration**

ANNEX II

Migration Management Support Teams working in 'hotspot' areas

I INTRODUCTION

In the current refugee crisis, the EU is confronted with situations where the sheer number of persons crossing the external border of a Member State exceeds the capacity to manage the arrival of migrants in an orderly manner. In such situations, the Union must support a Member State which faces disproportionate migratory pressure at its external border. This is an imperative in a Union that is governed by the principle of solidarity. This support will enable the Member State concerned to comply with its legal obligations under EU law, including the identification, registration and fingerprinting of individuals upon arrival. For these crisis situations, the Commission developed the approach of Migration Management Support Teams in 'hotspots'.

What is the approach?

A 'hotspot' is an area at the external border that is confronted with disproportionate migratory pressure. Examples are Sicily and Lampedusa in Italy or Lesbos and Kos in Greece. It is in these 'hotspots' where most migrants enter the Union. It is here where the EU needs to provide operational support to ensure that arriving migrants are registered, and to avoid that they move on to other Member States in an uncontrolled way. It is through the EU Agencies Frontex, the European Asylum Support Office and Europol that the Union provides operational support to Member States, under the full control of the host Member State. The approach is an operational concept to maximise the added value of this support through Migration Management Support Teams. This is an operational framework for the Agencies to concentrate their support on the spot where it is most needed, to coordinate their interventions and to cooperate closely with the authorities of the host Member State. Currently, the approach is being rolled out in Italy and Greece.

How do EU Agencies provide support under the approach?

Under this approach, the EU Agencies Frontex, the European Asylum Support Office and Europol provide specific support to the host Member State according to their mandate and expertise. For that, the Agencies send teams of experts directly to the 'hotspots' in the host Member State. These teams consist of experts deployed by other Member States. The composition and expertise of these Support Teams are tailor-made to the specific situation and needs at the 'hotspot' where they operate to support the authorities of the host Member State. Frontex deploys screening experts and provides mobile offices to support the host Member State in registering and fingerprinting migrants upon arrival. In addition, Frontex deploys expert teams to support the debriefing of migrants to understand their routes to Europe and to gather information on the modus operandi of migrant smugglers. Where needed, experts from Frontex also provide pre-return assistance and coordinate return flights. The experts of the European Asylum Support Office support the host Member States with the registration of asylum seekers and the preparation of the case file. And Europol and Eurojust send teams of investigators to support the collection of information to dismantle migrant smuggling networks.

In each host Member State, there is a joint operational headquarters with representatives of all three agencies (the European Union Regional Task Force – EURTF). It coordinates the work of the Support Teams at the 'hotspots' and ensures close cooperation with the national authorities of the host Member State. Such a joint operational headquarters has been set up in

Catania (Sicily) to coordinate the work in Italy, and a similar headquarters will be set up in Piraeus for the 'hotspots' in Greece.

The approach will also facilitate the implementation of the Decisions to relocate persons in clear need of international protection from Italy and Greece. The identification, registration and fingerprinting of migrants upon arrival is a precondition for relocation to work, and the approach provides the necessary support for this. However, the approach functions independently from relocation, and the Commission is ready to apply it in additional Member States that face disproportionate migratory pressure at its borders.

The Support Team does not operate reception centres. For the approach to be successful, the host Member State has to provide well-functioning reception facilities in which the expert teams deployed by the EU Agencies can operate. This includes first reception and pre-removal centres. The existence of sufficient reception facilities is also a necessary precondition for relocation, and the EU provides substantial financial support to Member States to build this infrastructure.

2. STATE OF PLAY: ITALY

- Technical meetings between the Commission, the EU Agencies and the Italian authorities, including on 23 July, where the Commission was present at a meeting in Rome, and video-conferences on 6 July and 10 September, and a meeting organised by the Commission in Brussels on 2 September. During this time there were several bilateral meeting and contacts between Italy and the Agencies.
- Submission of the roadmap for relocation to the Commission on 15 September in line with the Council Decision on Relocation, which includes a needs assessment for setting up the hotspots. The roadmap is being reviewed following comments provided by the Commission and a revised version is expected soon.
- Workshop on relocation on 21 September, where Italy presented its roadmap for relocation.
- Establishment of an EU Regional Task in Catania on 26 June 2015, composed of representatives of Frontex, EASO, Europol, EUNAVFORMED and national authorities to coordinate efforts of the Support Teams, ensuring coverage at different ports of disembarkation. Support of Eurojust to the Operational Frontex Regional Team in Catania and intensive cooperation with the correspondent of the National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Directorate (DNA) responsible for the district of Catania.
- Presence of Frontex for Joint Operation Triton.
- Reinforcement by Frontex with the deployment of 18 debriefing experts, 16 cultural mediators and 12 screening experts.
- Setting up of first reception centres at four hotspots namely, Pozzallo, Porto Empedocle, and Trapani in Sicily and the island of Lampedusa with a total capacity of approximately 1500. Two more first reception centres are planned for Augusta and Taranto by the end of the year.
- Agreement between EASO and Italy on operational plan for hotspots. Italy has accepted that EASO assists it with the provision of information, including on the relocation procedure, the relocation procedure itself and reinforcement of the Dublin unit.
- EASO has 45 experts ready to be deployed that have been committed by Member States.

- Pilot project between the asylum services and EASO.
- Regular presence of Europol at ports of disembarkation where it provides direct cross-match facilities and forensics support in coordination with the Italian Europol National Unit.

What still needs to be done

- Deployment of Frontex staff for assisting in fingerprinting.
- Deployment of EASO experts to Italy.
- Italy to submit their additional needs to Frontex as regards return.
- Submission of revised version of the roadmap on relocation, including needs assessment.

3. STATE OF PLAY: GREECE

- Technical meetings between the Commission, the EU Agencies and the Greek authorities, including on 26 August, where the Commission was present at a meeting in Piraeus, and video-conferences on 10 July and 11 September, and a meeting organised by the Commission in Brussels on 2 September. During this time there were several bilateral meeting and contacts between Greece and the Agencies.
- Visit by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Avramopoulos to Greece, including to Kos, on 3-4 September.
- Submission of the roadmap for relocation to the Commission on 14 September in line with the Council Decision on Relocation, which includes a needs assessment for setting up the hotspots. The roadmap is being reviewed by the Greek authorities following comments provided by the Commission and a revised version is expected soon.
- Workshop on relocation on 21 September, where Greece presented its roadmap for relocation.
- Identification of the Frontex Liaison Office in Piraeus as being the premises for the EU Regional Task Force.
- Presence of Frontex for Joint Operation Poseidon.
- Reinforcement by Frontex with the deployment of 33 experts (including Greek officials) and the installation of 7 mobile offices on the Aegean Islands (Samos, Lesbos, Chios, Kos, and Leros). Greece has accepted an offer by Frontex to deploy 30 more screeners and de-briefers.
- Ongoing discussions between EASO and Greece on an operational plan for hotspots. Greece has accepted that EASO supports it with the registration of applicants for international protection, the referral for outgoing Dublin ‘take charge’ requests and the provisional relocation measures. EASO has proposed the deployment of 28 experts. Once agreement is reached on this operational plan, EASO will launch the call for experts.
- Ongoing pilot project on Eurodac being run jointly with the assistance of Frontex, EASO, EU-LISA, and a technical visit to Lesbos regarding this pilot project is planned for the end of this week.

- Setting up of a first reception centre and a screening centre in Lesvos, with a total capacity of 480 persons, as well as a screening centre in Chios and another one in Samos with a total capacity of 393 persons.
- Establishment of two designated point of registration in Lesvos, with plans to set up another registration point soon.

What still needs to be done

- Submission of revised version of the roadmap on relocation, including needs assessment.
- Establishment of the EU Regional Task Force from where the Agencies can coordinate efforts on the ground and with the national authorities.
- Greece must put in place a clear method/arrangement for the systematic identification, registration and fingerprinting of migrants in EURODAC.
- Significant strengthening of first reception capacity for new arrivals in mixed migratory movements on the Aegean islands, for which the Commission has just awarded €4.1 million. There is urgent need for first reception capacity in Kos, where most of the third-country nationals arrive and where there is currently no reception facility.
- Greece should trigger the Civil Protection Mechanism to provide immediate assistance to migrants arriving on the islands, including shelter.
- Agreement with EASO on the operational plan for hotspots, on the tasks of the experts to be deployed and on the number of experts.
- Greece should restart taking and executing return decisions.
- Greece to submit their additional needs to Frontex as regards return and to Europol as regards investigations on migrant smuggling.