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Sent: lundi 16 novembre 2020 15:53
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Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Greece - Flash report of TF mission - 10-13 November 2020

Dear President, Dear Vice-President, dear Commissioner, dear colleagues,

*Please find here below the **Flash report of the Taskforce mission to Athens and Lesvos on 10-13 November 2020.***

From 10 to 13 November, HOME Deputy Director-General and Head of the Taskforce for Migration Management Ms Beate Gminder visited Greece, accompanied by the Head of Unit C4 [REDACTED]. On 10 and 11 November she visited Lesvos together with members of the team on the ground while on 12 and 13 November she was in Athens, having meetings with the Minister of Migration and Asylum Mitarakis, the Secretary General for Reception Mr Logothetis, the Secretary General for Migration Policy Mr Georgiadis, the Secretary General for Health Mr Prezerakos, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Moreover, together with Minister Mitarakis she co-chaired the 2nd Migration Management Steering Committee of the Taskforce.

1/ Lesvos

The purpose of the visit on Lesvos was twofold:

- a) To continue the dialogue with the local Authorities (Region of Northern Aegean and two Municipalities of Lesvos islands), with a view to obtain their consensus for the identification of a proper site for the new permanent multi-purpose Reception and Identification Centre (MPRIC). The meetings were also attended by the Secretary General for Reception Mr Logothetis and the Special Secretary for cooperation with involved partners Mr Konstantinou.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DG REGIO provided an official letter requesting information on the projects that the authorities have proposed in order to promote the development of the island. A further mission with a technical team of government and Commission/EASO will start on 16 November.

- b) To check, on the ground, the progress made regarding the ongoing winterization works at the Mavrovouni temporary Reception and Identification Center (RIC)

Waterproofing of the tents has already been completed. The Technical department of the Ministry of Migration (MoMA) provided on 12/11 a detailed winterization plan for the temporary Mavrovouni camp containing milestones and detailed timelines of the works to be carried out. The planned works concern the tents' heating, hot water supply, drainage works, connection to the sewage network as well as construction of water and electricity grids. IOs and NGOs will support the efforts together with the contractor of the Ministry that is already working in the site.

According to the plan most of the works will be completed before Christmas which is a major challenge given that Covid restrictions and the presence of thousands of residents in the worksite add to the complexity of the project's implementation. Particularly hot showers remain a big issue. Some approvals from the municipality are still missing (water and sewage connection).

MoMA obtained from the Ministry of Environment an exemption of the temporary Mavrovouni RIC from the applicable rules concerning the need of an Environmental Impact assessment and the related procedures and permits. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2/ Multi Purpose RICs

In the margins of the visit to Athens, Minister Mitarakis and Ms Gminder signed the grant agreement for the new multi purpose RICs (MPRICs) on Samos, Kos and Leros. The total budget is 121 million and the completion of the works is expected by May 2021. However at least for Samos, Minister Mitaraki would seek to have the MPRIC finished much earlier. To this effect, the working group that is in charge of the transition to the new MPRICs on Samos held its first meeting on 12 November. The water supply remains an issue on Samos, however the authorities are confident that this can be solved with drilling.

3/ Asylum

The implementation of the EASO embedded model, the operation of a dedicated central team of caseworkers that draft decisions allowing for more interviews on the islands, as well as the launch of Project North by EASO have resulted in a 73% increase of asylum decisions and a 35% decrease of the backlog. 70,419 decisions were issued from January to October 2020 while the pending decisions were reduced to 82,646.

GAS plans to finalize all pending interviews on the islands by the end of January 2021 and Project North by the end of March 2021.

4/ Health

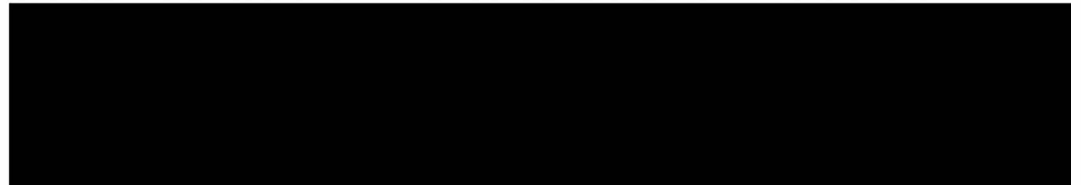
The DOG discussed with the Secretary General for Public Health the urgent need to cover the gaps in the deployment of medical professionals and especially doctors in the sites. The implementing agency (EODY) stated that they are in the process of recruiting 19 new doctors and their deployment on the ground is expected by the end of November. In order to attract medical professional to sign up for Philos 11, the Secretary General committed to proceed with the provision of further incentives for doctors, such as increased salary, extension of contract period, recognition of medical service in the RICs as rural service (required under the Greek law for medical specialisation). The Ministry will also request officially the extension of deployment of the medical teams deployed by WHO on Lesvos.

COM requested a detailed list of gaps in medical professionals per site in order to examine the possibility of organising secondment of staff from Member States to the sites.

Access to healthcare remains a challenge for many migrants who face issues with their health insurance card (PAAYPA). The problems are mostly attributed to non-renewal of their cards as a consequence of Covid restrictions, or due to having arrived in Greece prior to legislative regulation introducing PAYPA. The Secretary General for Reception, EODY and the Ministry of Health need to coordinate with the e-government centre for social security (IDIKA) in order to solve the issue.

5/ Expansion of accommodation capacity

As an input to the decongestion strategy that is being developed, IOM shared an overview of the existing sites for which the capacity could be expanded. However clear guidance from MOMA is still pending. Some Rub Halls could be installed as soon as MoMA approval is provided, but additional Rub Halls will probably need to be procured depending on the final decision of the Ministry in terms of capacity increase.



800 containers that the Ministry of Defence is procuring are greatly needed in order to increase the reception capacity in Samas, Malakasa and elsewhere. Following some appeals that were filed against the award decision, the procedure has been frozen for months, pending the publication of a court decision. Following that, it will probably take another 3-4 months until the containers are on site.



6/ ESTIA

The transition of the ESTIA accommodation scheme from UNHCR to MoMA is ongoing. Half of the accommodation places have already been transferred to the Ministry (MoMA). For the second group of apartments still in the process of transition, a 3-month

extension has been requested by MoMA and agreed in principle by the EC in order to facilitate and promote the transition. The extension is needed in order for the owners of the apartments to have time to move to the new scheme.



7/ Integration – Residence permit and travel documents

As more and more asylum decisions are being issued, the number of recognised refugees grows and so does the number of cases of non-compliance with exit rules. It seems that the main reasons for non-compliance are the long delays in providing recognised refugees with the residence permit and travel documents they are entitled to. The Greek authorities plan to accelerate the provision of these documents with a view to unblock exits and alleviate the pressure from the reception system. They would appreciate if the EC could facilitate this effort.

COM will follow up with the Greek authorities and IOM in order to receive a list of all the documents needed for recognised refugees to access the Helios integration programme as well as all other legal documents they are entitled to. The aim is promote enrolment to Helios.

8/ Helioxenia

Due to the COVID-19, it will probably be needed to extend the operation of Helios hotels, where recognised refugees were transferred temporarily from Lesvos, post the fire in Moria.

9/ UAMs

The Ministry of Labour/ Head of EKKA, assured that steps have now been taken for the interim guardianship scheme to be launched by the end of 2020. It will be in place for 6-8 months until a permanent, professional guardianship scheme is set up (estimated time June 2021). A call for expression of interest is reportedly under way.

The protective custody practice (i.e. unaccompanied minors being kept in Police detention centres) will be terminated next week or at the latest by the end of the month.



Some 200 UAM have been identified as being either homeless or living under precarious conditions. It is a priority to include this category in the relocation scheme.

Approximately 2,550 places in long-term accommodation and semi-independent living (Semi Independent Living) will be available by the end of the year. There is a need for additional EMAS funding, as most of the current funding has already been absorbed. An application has been submitted and is being assessed by COM. It needs to be complementary to the bilateral assistance given by NL and DK.

10/ The main priorities of minister Mitaraki in 2020 and in 2021:

in 2020: Capacity building such as recruitment of staff, bringing all services of the ministry under the same building (currently in 5 different buildings), offices' infrastructure, construction of MPRICS. A Permanent Secretary General for

Finance and Admin (Ms Foteini Koulouri) has just been recruited. This is expected to improve the effectiveness of financial department and speed up processing of payments, which is currently very slow, resulting in complaints by the contractors.



With kind regards,

on behalf of the Taskforce



European Commission
DG Migration and Home Affairs
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