



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

Task Force Migration Management

3RD MIGRATION MANAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 17 DECEMBER 2020

MINUTES

1. Asylum Procedures

GAS representative M. [REDACTED] informed that they have completed **70 254 end-of-process cases** and **38 792 registrations** since the beginning of the year and until the end of November 2020. GAS expects the end-of-process numbers to increase and to soon reach a bit over 80 000 decisions (end of process ratio) at first instance by the end of 2020. In October, asylum offices focused more on the pending interviews rather than registrations and decisions, due to the second wave of COVID-19 and the challenges in the interviewing process.

At the same time, the **backlog has been reduced by 37.11% since January 2020 and now stands at 79 353**. GAS clarified that this number includes also pending registrations and not just pending decisions, as registration is the first step towards the lodging of the application in the asylum process. The number of pending registrations remains a bit high (19 024), mainly due to difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. At second instance, the **Appeals Committee** has issued a total of **24 349 decisions** until 16 December 2020, out of which 19 140 concerned the mainland and 5 209 concerned the islands. It should be noted that given the high number of negative second instance decisions (23 129), it is evident that the Appeals Authority confirms largely the decisions issued by the Greek Asylum Service. In total, for both first and second instance procedures, there has been a **40.82% reduction of the backlog** since the beginning of the year and until the end of November 2020.

Regarding the islands, GAS informed that the 21 pending interviews on Lesbos will be finalised within few days, while the 98 pending interviews on Chios will be finalised by the end of the year. Kos and Leros all pending interviews have been finalised and the Leros case workers have been assisting dealing with the backlog on Lesbos. The interview backlog on Samos remains a bit higher (786) as it was not possible to move as quickly as on the other islands due to COVID-19, the earthquake, fires and the general lack of space. Once the backlog on Samos is finalised, estimated by end January 2021, GAS will seek to introduce the possibility of remote interviews.

At the same time, **Project North** is progressing in the mainland with the support of EASO and so far 1 519 interviews have been completed. All pending interviews under Project North are planned to be finalised by April-May 2021. GAS and EASO are already exploring ways to support the Project and they elaborate more on the idea of conducting interviews on site in mainland. Besides COVID-19, Project North is running smoothly and in very good collaboration with RIS.

In terms of **IT tools**, registrations following pre-registrations on the Ministry's platform have commenced and RAOs have started to lodge applications for international protection based on the online pre-registration tool. This information will be automatically linked to the new Alkyoni 2 system.

In parallel, a **new decision on the individual tax number** of asylum applicants was published and will facilitate the issuance in an automated way of AFM for asylum applicants. GAS confirmed that its end target is the secure and valid identification of persons entering the country, which would ensure the automatic provision of information on reception, as well as the asylum procedure and the processing of their application. This has been done in the past by EASO mobile teams or during the visit of the applicant in the asylum offices but GAS is **envisaging the introduction of digital tools**. In this respect, the first smart identification cards have already been issued and will eventually replace the existing tri-folds.

Regarding the **relocation** of beneficiaries of international protection, GAS confirmed that the scheme is progressing and running smoothly. Moreover, GAS is about to publish additional positions for **lawyers** as to staff the Legal Aid Registry. Finally, upon the Commission's request, the Ministry agreed to include more specific asylum related data into its monthly report.

2. Migration management on the islands (other than Lesbos) and in the mainland

2.1. Health (10:10 - 10:20) (Ministry of Health & EODY)

In the absence of representatives of MoH and EODY, MoMA representatives informed that the presence of the emergency teams of the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Lesbos, whose mission was expected to end in December 2020, was fortunately prolonged until February 2021. This extension provides for some extra time for organising the takeover by MoH. In addition, it was confirmed that the creation of a pool of medical staff and doctors is still under discussion along with efforts to increase the attractiveness, e.g. for recent graduates, or to foresee visiting doctors at rotation. Regarding some cases of access to local hospitals being refused, e.g. mainly in Halkida, but also on Chios and Leros, MoMA ensured that all necessary measures were taken as to avoid new unfortunate incidents in the future and the MoH Sec Gen was also informed as to contact the Directors of these Hospitals and instruct them accordingly.

DG HOME highlighted the need to start already planning on how the medical services will be provided in the new MPRICs in the islands and how to ensure sufficient medical personnel will be deployed. MoMA noted also that the infrastructure of the new MPRICs will allow to alleviate the burden on the local hospitals in the islands.

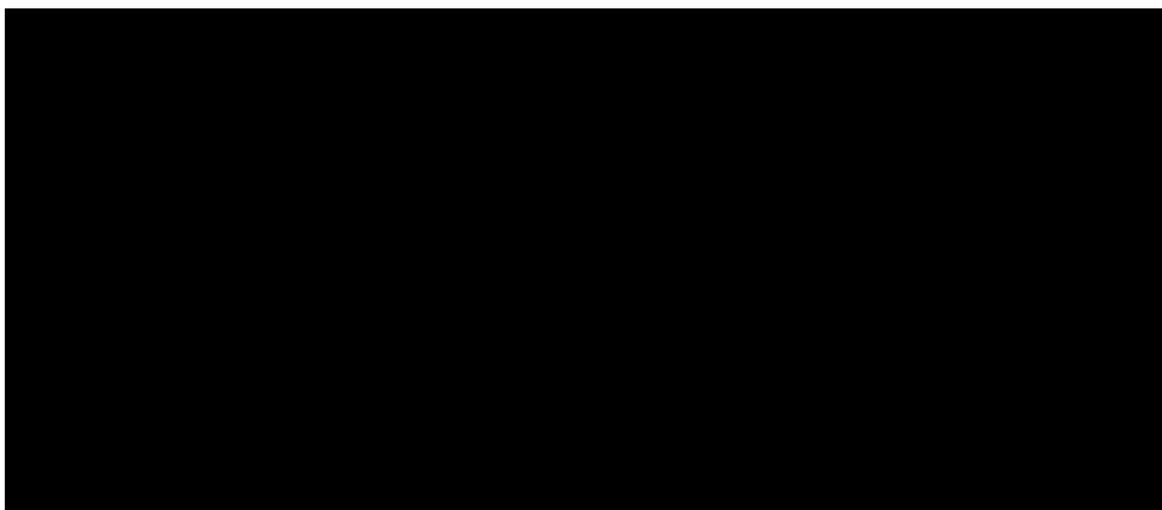
DG HOME informed that Commission is at the final stage of securing an envelope for Greece under ESI. The Financial Decision for the allocation of the funds from ESI to DG HOME has been adopted. A total allocation of EUR 25,32 million has been confirmed as to support the action on medical capacities for the reception facilities and the host communities.

2.2. Reception conditions and reception capacity

MoMA representative, General Secretary for Reception, M. Logothetis informed that RIS in the framework of the overall reception strategy works on the improvement of the receptions conditions in all the facilities. More precisely, regarding winterisation needs

efforts are made in all the sites. More precisely in Sintiki (Serres/Klidi) the replacement of the tents by containers is well advanced with 110 containers already placed and the installation of the remaining 50 being ongoing. In Malakasa 2, following the delays in the procurement of the MoD containers, RIS requested IOM to support with the installation of some rub halls as a contingency measure while awaiting for the procurement of the containers to be finalised. Some 55 TCNs were already moved into the first rubhall installed. In Malakasa 1, the old, all the tents were replaced by containers donated by Denmark through the EU civil protection mechanism. A total of 41 containers have been placed and 167 TCNs were already moved into.

In addition, construction works for the expansion of some current sites are ongoing, while two sites have also been identified as a contingency plan in case of sudden increased influx or in case of need of emergency transfers from other sites. The table below summarises the situation at this stage.



Regarding the overall progress on improving the reception conditions in all facilities, MoMA informed about the bilateral help received by some MS, e.g. the donations for the 5 RICs of medical containers and personnel from Slovakia, the English donation of portable x-ray machines and the Austrian for microbiological equipment and ambulances. Furthermore, MoMA insisted that the upcoming support from ESI will be used as to enhance COVID-19 preparedness through the installation of modular medical clinics and the procurement of mobile clinics. In the same direction, MoMA considers that the upcoming Framework Agreements for the main services in the camps, such as catering, cleaning, maintenance and security will help to upgrade the reception conditions. However, MoMA highlighted that adequate fencing of the sites is deemed necessary.

Regarding the situation in the islands, MoMA notified that the Committee for the closure of the RIC at Vathy convened on 12 November 2020. The transfers from Vathy to the Zervou site (new RIC) are expected to be completed within 10 days, once started, however the exact date for starting the transfer exercise is still pending. The main challenges ahead of for the transfer consist on the sufficient water supply, the disposal of biological wastewater and the increase in capacity. The electricity and the water connection are completed according to RIS. However, RIS requested IOM to procure 100 containers and 6 rub-halls for the part in Zervou prepared by IOM, in order to compensate for the gaps created by the delays of the MoD containers, as well as the donated containers to the people affected by the earthquake. MoMA representative reminded also that before the opening of the new site, extra services will need to be

foreseen, such as transportation, the approval of the municipality for the placement and opening of shops around and inside the new site, the installation of ATM for withdrawal of cash, etc. In addition, RIS is in contact with all actors on the ground and is awaiting the proposals for the shelter allocation. Transfers to mainland continued despite the restrictions of COVID-19 but were less important.

Regarding the new MPRICs on Samos, Leros and Kos, MoMA reminded that as already explained in the recent Steering Committee dedicated to the implementation of the EMAS grant, the works are ongoing and advancing well and according to the set the timeframe. In addition, a place has been identified in Chios.

Concerning the exits of beneficiaries of international protection (BIP), RIS notified that in October 2020 the exits from the sites other than ESTIA amounted to 1007 persons and in November to 818. In addition, since mid November the TCNs who have submitted their travel documents are 1373 for ADET (IDs) and 320 for TDV (travel documents).

Furthermore, MoMA representative informed that the Greek authorities are working on three levels in order to enhance exits and effectiveness of integration for beneficiaries of international protection: i) enhanced communication to inform beneficiaries on their future perspectives in Greece, ii) faster processing for the issuance of residence permits and swift issuance of other necessary formalities and iii) design of additional integration projects.

In addition, MoMA believes that the use of the entry exit system in the sites will contribute to the efforts to increase exits, that should take place whatsoever in a coordinated way. Additional measures will be considered in the future when the administrative formalities will be issued timely.

DG HOME insisted on the need to accelerate further the exits of the BIP from the reception system and towards integration.

Regarding FILOXENIA II and the exits from the hotels, MoMA notified that they are in line with the phase out plan and they are optimistic that they will be successfully closing down the scheme. It was noted that a few extra days or a week may be needed for closing the last places accommodating asylum seekers and that COM will be informed accordingly in the coming days if the need arises. On the other hand, MoMA explained that the Helioxenia hotels accommodating BIP transferred from the islands may need to be reinforced.

DG HOME reminded that the grand of FILOXENIA I was recently extended until the end of May 2021 in order to allow the appropriate timing to identify the building to replace the Aharnon building. However, in case no solution is found until the end of May 2021, COM will have to proceed with the recovery of the funds. Therefore, MoMA was urged to accelerate the search of a suitable building and to proceed with the necessary administrative steps.

Regarding ESTIA 2020, the three months non-cost extension for the untransitionable apartments it will concern 641 units in mainland, 157 units in islands and 45 units that the owners decided to discontinue after 31 December 2020. For ESTIA 2021, despite some issues related to the call, that the ministry is addressing internally, the Greek authorities are optimistic about its success and they are confident it will result to full transition. MoMA expects to start already contracting in the coming days the first implementing partners. In parallel, efforts are on-going aiming to reduce the natural loss

and to enhance occupancy by making internal transfers of beneficiaries. Coordination with RIS is extensive in order to accommodate the needs arising from the closure of apartments in islands and the closure of FILOXENIA II. Finally, the ESTIA exits were not suspended and amidst the pandemic the results were very poor.

Concerning the Cash assistance component of ESTIA, a timeline has been developed upon and both UNHCR and DPAS are working for its successful transition.

2.3. Unaccompanied Minors

Relocation

SSUAM reported on the implementation of the voluntary relocation scheme from Greece, which continues at a steady pace.

Guardianship

EKKA reported that the call for expression of interest for the UAM guardians has been concluded and that a temporary interim scheme will be put in place until the permanent guardianship will be established (estimated mid 2021).

A contractor with previous experience in the field has been selected (Metadrasi) and the interim scheme is expected to start very soon.

For the setting up of a permanent scheme, a Ministerial Decision is needed concerning the registry, regional offices across, supervisory council and recruitment of guardians.

Cooperation with Nidos

EKKA informed about the ongoing cooperation with Dutch Nidos. Three workshops have taken place with the participation of MoLSA, EKKA, SSUAM, UNHCR and the NL embassy. A fourth workshop is scheduled for January. The topics of discussion include exchange of expertise, legal support, evaluation tools, recruitment and training of guardians, translation and interpretation and supervision tools.

2.4. Integration

The Greek authorities are working together with IOM on the designing of the next phase of Helios that will be funded until June. By February 2021, the Greek authorities will be ready to issue the call for the continuation of the project under ESF+.

2.5. Financial Management

MoMA representative Ms [REDACTED] notified that the preparation for the publication of the framework contracts for the main services in the mainland camps and in the new MPRICs is ongoing and advancing well. MoMA noted however that the amounts foreseen for Greece under the new MFF are considerably lower than the needs faced on the ground.

3. Joint Pilot Lesbos

DG HOME highlighted the good collaboration among MoMA, COM, IOs and the implementing partners as well as the shared commitment to advance the works as soon as possible.

MoMA representative, Secretary General M. Logothetis presented the state of play and the advancement of the works in Mavrovouni and the main elements of the presentation are attached to the present minutes as Annex 1. It was also noted that the WHO Rapid Response Mobile Laboratory will continue its operation until end of February, while it was reminded that health services in the temporary site are provided by several actors through the supervision of EODY and WHO (Medical Volunteers International, Boat Refugee Foundation, EODY Support, Kitrinos Healthcare and Healthbridge Medical Organization). Moreover, in the Quarantine COVID-19 area the tents will be replaced by containers and the works are expected to start already the week of 21 December.

DG HOME welcomed the progress made and the advancement of the works and urged on the need to focus on possible solutions as to further accelerate the installation and provision of hot showers, this being a critical point that should be dealt with before the year-end.

MoMA Head of Technical Department M. [REDACTED], presented the efforts made from the side of the Ministry for the identification of the land for building the new MPRIC on Lesvos. The relevant maps were presented highlighting the proposed plots [REDACTED]

4. Financial Situation 2021

DG HOME reminded that due to the transitioning period between the current and the next programming period, the EU emergency assistance is very scarce. In case further support is needed, strict prioritisation should be applied. In the framework, the co-financing percentage of possible EMAS might be lowered in an effort to accommodate ongoing requests.

DG HOME highlighted the importance of submitting as soon as possible the Financial Plan for 2021. The Financial Plan 2021 is very important because it covers the transitional year bridging the ongoing funding support under the AMIF National Programme of Greece and Emergency Assistance projects towards the new programming period under the MFF 2021-2027.

Regarding the new MFF, it was explained that preliminary comments on the draft national programmes for the new programming period 2021-2027 will be communicated to the Responsible Authority before the end of the year.

5. AOB

Annex 1 – MoMA presentation on Mavrovouni



