

Date :	24/07/2020 [Video-Conference]		
Participants:	COM/DG HOME: [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED]	EASO: [REDACTED] Frontex: [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Europol: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Asylum Service: [REDACTED] Civil Defence: [REDACTED] Civil Registry and Migration Department: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Aliens & Immigration Police: [REDACTED] Ministry of Health: [REDACTED] Responsible Authority: [REDACTED] Social Welfare Services: [REDACTED]

Chair: COM/DG HOME: [REDACTED]

1. Scope of activities of the Working Group on first reception

At the initiative of the Commission, the OCP Working Group on first reception was set-up in December 2019 jointly with the relevant Cypriot authorities and Union agencies. This dedicated OCP Working Group was established given the need to follow-up on operational issues in a more systematic and coordinated manner with all actors concerned, in relation to first reception capacities and procedures. The Working Group can meet on a monthly basis, in principle back-to-back with the meetings of the Operational Coordination Platform on migration management support to Cyprus (OCP-CY) – depending on the needs and developments on the ground. The discussions shall be technical and focussed on operational issues, requiring therefore that the different entities directly involved are represented accordingly.

2. Aim of the meeting

The Commission has been supporting the establishment and operation of the ‘Pournara’ centre since 2013 and the previous programming period under the External Border Fund (EBF) and since 2014 under the Internal Security Fund (ISF). This centre aims to be a fully-fledged first reception centre, for which standard operating procedures are still due to be established. The need for a proper functioning of this centre is becoming more and more urgent, taking also into account Cyprus application for the ISF Borders Specific Action for supporting this centre until 2022, currently under assessment. This video-conference aimed to finalise the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for ‘Pournara’ centre.

3. Establishing and streamlining procedures at first reception

- a) **Alien Registration Certificate (ARC) should be issued at ‘Pournara’** as this is of utmost importance for following the third-country nationals (TCNs) throughout the migration management system and steps, including their whereabouts, while saving money and time from unnecessary transfers and potential double medical exams during first reception or avoiding the eventual granting of benefits to irregular migrants. **CRMD confirmed that two officers are already placed at ‘Pournara’ to issue the ARC electronically. However, the asylum registration seems to be still a precondition, at least technically, for the issuance of ARC.**
- b) The revised draft SOPs developed by the Commission jointly with the EU agencies were thoroughly discussed with the Cypriot authorities during the video-conference in view of their finalisation and changes have been incorporated in the text accordingly *[document attached to*

these conclusions]. Regarding point [0] on mass arrivals either by sea or after crossing the Green Line, national protocols apply at the point of arrival prior to the transfer at 'Pournara' centre such as the 'Nafkratis' plan which is currently triggered for mass arrivals over 30 persons.

- c) CAS is taking over from the Civil Defence all responsibilities related to 'Pournara', including transfers to the centre as of 1 August 2020.
- d) Ministry of Health announced that the development of medical SOPs will be delayed. Currently, a medical staff member is responsible for the medical screening and examination tasks in 'Pournara'.
- e) SWS informed that the procedure for the recruitment of EU funded additional staff is being completed and by early September SWS will have enough people fully dedicated to asylum seekers, including deployments to the 'Kofinou' and 'Pournara' centres.
- f) A ministerial decree was issued for testing migrants upon arrival for COVID-19. Migrants are then put in quarantine for 14 days.

4. Operational Conclusions

- **Joint follow-up needs to continue being ensured for developments in setting up 'Pournara'**, as the centre aims at establishing streamlined procedures with the participation of all Cypriot authorities and relevant EU agencies. The Commission will continue supporting in this context.
- The agreed SOPs for 'Pournara' should start swiftly being implemented, as these can help ensure streamlined procedures in line with the EU acquis in view of an effective and efficient migration management in Cyprus.
- An annex to the SOPs concerning the transfers to 'Pournara' will be developed as soon as possible by the Asylum Service who informed that already a minibus was purchased for such transfers.
- It was agreed that **a simplified screening procedure will be considered while preliminary discussions already took place between Frontex and the Police in July**. The screening procedure, as part of the overall registration procedure, should also help accelerating the collection of the data needed for the initial registration of the migrants and the swift issuance of the ARC. **Dedicated discussions will take place in this respect in August, between the relevant departments of Cyprus Police, Frontex and Europol.**
- Concerning the asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups, their referral upon exiting 'Pournara' will take place based on a comprehensive reception strategy, compliant with the relevant EU legislation and reception standards. This strategy should be finalised as soon as possible and at the latest by the time 'Pournara' is fully operational.
- The Aliens Registration Certificate (ARC) should be issued first as the "unique identifier number" of a migrant, or at least at the same time (*but in any event not after*) with any other file number e.g. the asylum file number. The ARC should be issued electronically to all migrants been processed irrespectively of any follow-up legal status. Pending issues should be resolved as soon as possible.

5. Follow-up

a.	4 th meeting of the OCP working group to take place via Video-conference [date tbd. in due time].	September 2020 [tbd]
b.	CAS to finalise the annex on transfers to 'Pournara' centre as soon as possible.	ASAP
c.	Hold a dedicated meeting for the ARC related pending issues.	September 2020
d.	The State Medical Services to complete the development of their specific SOPs before the centre is fully operational.	ASAP
e.	Meeting on simplifying the screening procedure between the relevant departments of Cyprus Police, Frontex and Europol.	ASAP
f.	A comprehensive reception strategy in line with the EU acquis should be finalised by the time 'Pournara' is fully operational.	ASAP