



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HOME AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF THE POLICY DIALOGUE WITH GREECE

Home Affairs Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020

30 October 2013

Venue:

Divani Acropolis Hotel, Athens

I. OVERALL FUNDING OBJECTIVES / PRIORITIES FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Both Greece and the Commission acknowledged the importance of the Policy Dialogue prior to the preparation of the national programme. It was agreed that the discussions would be structured around the Annotated Agenda. The meeting allowed to jointly identify and define the priorities for the multi-annual financial framework for the period 2014-2020, thus facilitating the implementation of Greece's national programme. As foreseen, the agreed minutes of the meeting will form the basis for the elaboration of Greece's national programme respectively for the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF).

The Policy Dialogue should also be seen in the context of the implementation of Greece's Action Plan on Migration and Asylum and the work developed by the Task-Force Greece: the initiatives to be funded by the AMF and the ISF, according to a multi-annual strategic planning, should therefore build on the actions identified and implemented in the framework of that action plan and the technical assistance provided by the task-force.

It was agreed to focus the discussion on what Greece wishes to achieve in the areas of asylum, migration and security, having always EU objectives in mind and the full respect of the implementation of the EU acquis. In this respect, the Commission drew attention to serious allegations of cases of "push-back" practices that were claimed to have been carried out by the Greek authorities at sea and land borders; such alleged practices could constitute a violation of the EU Law. Greece considered those allegations to be unfounded rumours and reiterated that all measures had been taken to ensure that such alleged "push-backs" do not occur. Such allegations are being followed with the Greek authorities.

Discussions took place with the support of a number of presentations prepared by Greece containing a detailed description of the current situation and the concrete measures to be developed to address the different challenges.

Greece and the Commission agreed that the new programming of the AMF and the ISF should be based on a multi-annual strategic approach taking into account Greece's specific situation, existing vulnerabilities and key legal issues that need to be addressed in an effective manner, as well as the impact/added-value of the Home Affairs Funds in addressing the country's needs. Such approach should be consistent with Greece's national strategy, focusing on a limited number of priorities/building blocks and clearly aligning funding with those political objectives and priorities, with information exchange and training/capacity building in relevant areas as a cross-cutting component. Such long-term planning must allow a minimum of flexibility to adapt to new challenges and unforeseen needs and take in due consideration all sources of funding, in particular the EU Structural Funds. This will require multi-annual planning of investment and improved implementation, including the adoption of outcome oriented common indicators, which will need to be addressed in the architecture of the management and control system.

INTERNAL SECURITY FUND (ISF)

1. Border management and Schengen governance

Greek authorities made a number of presentations describing the organisation of border management in Greece, their achievements and their investments needs and plans for the future.

The Commission acknowledged the considerable progress made by Greece in this area, as also confirmed by the preliminary results from the recent Schengen evaluation visit. Considering that ISF resources available for Greece, although important, are rather limited (approximately 167 M€ for 2014-2020), the Commission invited Greece to express its needs and future investment plans in operational terms and to prioritise them. Such plan should be based on a risk-assessment approach, addressing the key priorities in a 7 years perspective.

The Commission highlighted the need for Greece to consolidate its capacity in border management, moving from the "emergency approach" pursued so far - where Greece was forced to take measures to react to strong and sudden migratory pressures - towards a more strategic/long-term management, which would enable the country to manage the external border in a sustainable manner and deal adequately with possible future massive migratory flows. It was agreed that measures to be developed in this area should take duly in consideration and build on the work developed or planned in the framework of Greece's Action Plan on Asylum and Migration. Furthermore, the Commission recalled the importance of building a sound multiannual investment strategy, considering carefully what should be purchased and when. The planning should also anticipate possible problems in the implementation phase of the projects.

Finally, Greece and the Commission also agreed that increasing cooperation with third countries, and in particular Turkey, whether through the national programme or Union Actions, would also be relevant.

1.1 Definition of a national strategy for border management

It was agreed that Greece's will finalise and adopt a comprehensive integrated national border management strategy (covering sea borders, land borders, first reception system, central coordination, etc.) which clearly identifies the priorities and results to be achieved over the next seven years in the areas of border management and Schengen governance, with a corresponding investment plan that would also include maintenance costs, as well as clear distribution of responsibilities within its national administration allowing efficient and effective operational cooperation between the concerned authorities (Hellenic Police, Hellenic Coast Guard, Customs, etc.).

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Timely adoption of a national strategy for border management, including all components (sea borders, land borders, first reception, central coordination).
- Definition of priorities and adoption of investment plan in line with the national strategy and the overall priorities.

1.2 Effective capacity of "first reception" to manage mixed flows at the borders

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to the development of the capacity of the "first reception" to manage in an effective manner mixed migratory flows. ISF funds should be mobilised to ensure the opening and adequate functioning of "first reception centres" and screening mobile units, with capacity to address urgent humanitarian needs and paying special attention to vulnerable groups. Priority

should also be given to the setting up of a communication strategy to raise awareness on the tasks of such centres, the development of quality assurance mechanisms and the establishment of strong partnerships between such centres and civil society organisations.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Fully functioning First Reception Center in the region of Evros (Fylakio).
- Adequate level of facilities and services at all First Reception Centres (FRC).
- Adequate level of facilities and services at screening centres (on the islands) where mobile screening units operate.
- Development of screening mobile units capable of providing effective first reception and screening, in particular addressing urgent humanitarian needs, in possible emergency situations.
- Adequate training of First Reception Service (FRS) personnel and ensure that FRS is fully equipped to be able to cope with sudden and extraordinary migratory flows.
- Adequate training of border guards and relevant competent authorities on EU and international law in the area of border management, migration and asylum (this action can be complementary funded under AMF).

1.3 Development of EUROSUR

Greece and the Commission agreed that support to the development of EUROSUR should be a priority under Internal Security Fund, ensuring interagency cooperation and maintaining the national situational picture both for sea and land borders. Commission took note of the recently established National Coordination Centre (NCC) and highlighted the need for its consolidation.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Ensure that the Greece's National Coordination Centre (NCC) meets the EUROSUR requirements as of 2 December 2013. This requires that at least the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), responsible for sea border surveillance, and the Hellenic Police (HP), responsible for land border surveillance, cooperate with each other via the NCC side-by-side. Once the cooperation between the HCG and the HP is consolidated, the NCC should also be extended to the Customs and the Navy.
- Upgrade the national situational picture for EUROSUR by including information collected at the external land borders.
- Exploit possibility to make NCC also responsible for border checks and air border surveillance.
- Conduct feasibility study (phase B) for enhancing the operations of the Greek National Coordination Center (NCC) and advancement of the coordinating border surveillance and control capabilities (both sea, land and air borders) including seamless cooperation with NCC's of third countries.

1.4 Effective management of external land border, in particular of the Greek-Turkish land border

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to continued investment in the effective management of the external border, in particular of the Greek and Turkish land border, in line with a comprehensive integrated national border strategy and respective investment plan. It is broadly agreed that an effective border management would require addressing technical needs (e.g. automated surveillance system), sustainable staffing, improved operational coordination, including coherence and synergies with FRONTEX coordinated joint operations, and increased cooperation with Turkey. In this

respect, Greece explained the future developments of the automatic surveillance system at the Greek-Turkish border, which should be finalised and financed under the ISF.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Comprehensive long term strategy for the management of the Greek-Turkish land border addressing technical needs, sustainable staffing, cooperation with Turkey, as well as coherence and synergies with Frontex coordinated joint operations.
- Coherent and feasible investment plan (in line with the above strategy) for all the land external borders.

Structural actions to ensure the control of the Greek-Turkish land border.

1.5 Effective management of external maritime border

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to continued investment in the effective management of the external maritime border, in line with a comprehensive integrated national border strategy and respective investment plan, starting by the Eastern Aegean Sea area, which is the most exposed to the risk of irregular migratory flows. In this respect Greece highlighted the plan to set-up a border surveillance system in the Eastern Aegean sea, to be financed under the ISF.

The Commission highlighted also the possibility for Greece to increase the available EU funding by applying for additional money under the ISF-Borders Specific Actions (to purchase assets to be put at the disposal of FRONTEX-led operations).

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Adoption of medium/long term strategy for the management of the maritime borders.
- Adoption of coherent investment plan (in line with the above strategy).
- Adoption of structural actions to ensure the control of the sea borders and enhance the capacity to cope with possible increase in migratory flows/crisis situation.
- Possible deployment of adequate technology to improve the capacity in border management.
- Integrated and state of the art management system of external maritime border, including the deployment of manned and unmanned fixed and mobile sensors and surveillance systems. (Development of Regional Command Centers).

1.6 Implementation of the Schengen acquis

There is agreement that the full implementation of recommendations and actions from Schengen Evaluation reports, as further detailed in the other key policy issues, notably as regards effective management of land and maritime borders and on EUROSUR, should be a priority under the Internal Security Fund.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Full implementation of recommendations and actions from Schengen Evaluation reports.

1.7 Use of modern technology at the border

Greece and the Commission agreed on the importance of the use of modern technology at the border, notably automated border control (ABC) gates for EU citizens crossing the external border, which could be supported by the Internal Security Fund. Greece will invest in the modernisation of the management of its border crossing points (BCP), according to the concept of integrated border management, on the basis of a precise assessment for each individual border crossing point as to whether ABC systems would bring enough added value to the

throughput capacity of the BCP (including at the maritime borders) and thus decrease or limit travellers' border crossing time and/or reduce cost per border crossing.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Investment leading to use of interoperable modern technologies in line with European standards where they exist. For example ABC gates for EU citizens should also be able to be used for the future Registered Traveller Programme (RTP) component of the smart borders initiative, by implementing fingerprint readers.

2. Information Systems

Greece and the Commission agreed that support to the Visa Information System (VIS), Schengen Information System (SIS) and consular cooperation mechanisms constitute one of the main priorities of ISF.

2.1 Implementation of Visa Information System and increasing the "consular coverage" in Schengen visa issuance

It is agreed that Greece will pursue investments in this area. Greece will consider the possibility of increasing consular cooperation with other EU Member-States in view of further exploiting, in close consultation with the Commission, various forms of cooperation such as representation arrangements, co-locations, common visa application centres and external service providers, taking also in consideration the need to reinforce anti-fraud measures (falsification of documents) in cooperation with other Member States, FRONTEX and EUROPOL, as well as Greece's intention to reshuffle its consulate's network due to cuts in public spending. Regarding the implementation of VIS, Greece will consider the possibility of procurement of additional new generation VIS work stations, upgrading IT infrastructure and line band-width and covering a part of operational telecommunication costs.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Full implementation of VIS including VISMAIL available and in operation.
- VIS roll-out in consulates from the third and last set of regions and for the issuance of visas at the border.
- Preparation for the introduction of fingerprint verifications at the border.
- Efficient operations and customer-friendly service to visa applicants through staff training programmes, including in cooperation with other MS, increased consular cooperation by establishing common visa application centres (i.e. representation by/from other MS, or resource pooling with other MS).
- Further improve "consular coverage" in Schengen visa issuance, in order to avoid a disproportionate effort on the part of visa applicants to have access to consulates/ESPs.

2.2 Implementation of Schengen Information System II, including development of backup capability

Greece and the Commission agreed that implementation of Schengen Information System II, including development of backup capability, should be a priority of the Internal Security Fund.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- SIS II available and in operation.
- SIS II national system is resilient to cyber-attacks in terms of physical, computer and data security.

3. Internal security

It was agreed that Greece's approach to EU funding on internal security should be strategic, identifying clear priorities and results to be achieved over the 7 years period. This is particularly important in the context of a substantial shift from a call for proposals / project approach (as it is the case under current ISEC/CIPS programmes) towards an approach implying a planning for a 7 years period. Such approach should be consistent with Greece's national security strategy and the EU Internal Security Strategy. Priority should be given to those areas where it is expected EU funds will have a particular impact and added value. Within such strategy, it would also be important to identify those areas where there is a need for frontloading. Such strategic approach should be structured around a rather limited number of priority areas/sectors which would constitute its main clusters/building blocks, taking also in consideration, as regards fight against organised crime, the priorities agreed in the framework of the EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime.

It was also agreed that training, capacity building and information exchange activities are acknowledged as playing a highly relevant role. To allow some flexibility in the implementation of such type of activities, it would be advisable to strategically group them together in a cross-cutting cluster encompassing the different key priorities, according to a multi-annual programme with clearly defined objectives. Agreed key issues such as the implementation of the EU Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS) would then be covered through this pillar of the national programme.

3.1 Drug trafficking

Both sides agreed that fight against drug trafficking should be one of the priorities of Greece's national programme for ISF, having acknowledged that several factors contribute to Greece's vulnerabilities in this field, notably: the country's geographical position on the "Balkan routes", its extended land and sea border with third countries facilitating trafficking and making prevention/prosecution particularly challenging, and the fact that the southern part of Greece is a crucial point of the sea route that connects, through Suez Canal and Black Sea, the Asian regions of drug production with the big European markets.

ISF funding should be used to support investments aiming at an effective use of advanced technology (for example body checking in/out control systems at national airports with the use of new X-ray human body scanning machines and screening vehicles), as well as in new information systems aiming at detecting and fighting drug trafficking through the internet. It was also noted the importance of the link between this priority and financial investigation, namely to promote financial investigation in all serious and organised cases to prevent the use of drug trafficking proceeds to penetrate the licit economy and thus achieve a better disruption and dismantlement effect. Cross-border cooperation is also essential to tackle in an effective manner this issue, notably with other South-East Europe countries.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Increased number of seizures, prosecutions and convictions.
- Enhanced cooperation with other EU Member States and EU agencies, with increased flow of information to Europol.

3.2 Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is in nexus with asylum and irregular migration in Greece - the country is now the focus for illegal entry to the EU - fuelling exploitation and increasing the vulnerability of irregular migrants to trafficking in human beings. Greece and the

Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to the reinforcement of the country's capacities to fight trafficking in human beings, in line with the EU Directives on the matter, aiming also at considerably reducing, in the short/medium term, demand in all forms of human trafficking. The need of close cooperation between all the different stakeholders involved, both public and private, is also acknowledged, as well as the importance of cooperation with third countries on this matter.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Effective prevention, protection, detection and prosecution of THB, including compensation and other forms of assistance to victims of THB through durable solutions.
- Reduced demand in all forms of THB and higher number of proactive investigations and confiscations of instruments/benefits of THB.
- Improvement of national referral mechanism, increased operational capacities of first line responders, and increased cooperation with civil society organisations nationwide.
- Enhanced training and cooperation between the different actors, including police, labour inspectors, immigration and asylum officials, border guards, trade unions, civil society organisations, etc.
- Improved data collection and reporting.
- Improved awareness of human trafficking, including targeting stereotypes and prejudices towards victims of trafficking.

3.3 Anti-corruption policy (in particular in public procurement procedures)

Greece and the Commission agreed that anti-corruption measures should be a priority under the Internal Security Fund. In line with a comprehensive national strategy and the national anti-corruption action plan adopted in early 2013, the activities supported by the fund would consist essentially in measures aiming at ensuring increased transparency and effective checks for public procurement, protection of whistle-blowers, as well as enhanced cooperation between local administration, external control mechanisms and law enforcement forces.

It was also agreed that good coordination with activities funded through other financial instruments, such as for instance those to be supported through the Structural Funds, would be important.

It was noted that the soon to be published EU Anti-Corruption Report should also provide some useful indications on the groups/areas to be considered the most vulnerable and therefore deserving particular attention.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Effective implementation of the anti-corruption related measures to be covered by the future public procurement reform strategy.
- Strengthened and coordinated ex-ante and ex-post controls of the legality and integrity of procurement procedures, including at regional/local level and on EU-funded projects.
- Enhanced cooperation between public procurement authorities and anti-corruption authorities that would lead to increased detection and dissuasive sanctioning of corrupt practices (including conflicts of interests and favouritism).
- Effective mechanisms in place for systematic corruption risk assessments to address vulnerable areas related to public spending and public procurement.
- Strengthened internal control mechanisms within contracting authorities.
- Setting up of an appropriate legal framework, in line with other EU Member States, aiming at preventing and combating corruption through elimination of tax evasion.

3.4 Develop financial investigation in all serious and organised crime cases to dismantle criminal networks, provide prosecutable evidence before the judge, develop monitoring and detection tools and trace criminal assets

Given the penetration of licit economy by criminal organisations, notably through the use of front-companies, which is particularly relevant in a country such as Greece with a large informal economy, both sides agreed on the need to enhance financial investigation as a means to support criminal investigation in view of better detection and dismantlement of criminal networks beyond the sole front line offenders and national borders, identifying it as a priority area under the ISF.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Development of a strategic approach aiming to ensure, as far as possible, in full compliance with the new FATF standards and recommendations, and respective interpretative notes, the opening of a financial investigation in parallel to criminal investigations in all serious and organised crime cases.
- Improvement of detection, investigation and prosecution capabilities.
- Increased number of financial investigators and financial analysts recruited and trained.
- Significant rise in the number of financial investigations developed and increased results.
- Strengthening the cooperation with the National Asset Recovery Office, through the development of a computerized data exchange system, as well as with the corresponding offices in other EU Member States .
- Setting up of an exchange information platform for the cooperating offices, such as banking institutions, insurance companies, agencies of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor, land registration services, etc.
- Development of an information system to analyze crime activity data collected by law enforcement agencies and identify crime density areas (hot spots) and criminality spatial patterns.

3.5 Weak implementation of information exchange mechanisms ("Prüm Decision" and "Swedish Initiative")

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to the implementation of information exchange mechanisms.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Full implementation of the Prüm Decision (2008/615/JHA) by stepping-up investments in technical equipment and training, as well as the administrative, legal and organisational requirements for the exchange of data.
- Integration of the provisions of the Swedish Initiative (2006/960/JHA) into the workflow processes of relevant Greek authorities.
- Establishing a comprehensive national SPOC (Single Point of Contact) for international information exchange in line with EIXM¹ recommendations.
- Initiatives aiming at connecting Greece in the area of vehicle registration data, as well as promoting the automated exchange of fingerprint and DNA data.

¹ European Information Exchange Model, Communication COM (2012) 735 published in December 2012.

3.6 Improve capabilities in the fight against cybercrime at national level and contribute to improvement at EU level

It is agreed that priority should be given, under ISF, to support initiatives aiming at further building Greece's capacity to prevent and respond to cybercrime and foster exchange of information and cooperation between the different communities involved (including the public sector, private companies, CERTs, law enforcement and academia). Such initiatives should be in line with a national strategy and the EU Cyber-security Strategy. In this context, both sides agreed on the need to pay special attention to issues such as the fight against child sexual exploitation online.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

In line with the EU Cyber-security Strategy:

- Development of a National Cyber Security Strategy aiming at enhancing Greece's network and information security and improve its resilience, as well as identify gaps and further strengthen its capability to investigate and combat cybercrime.
- Support to bodies that make the link between research/academia, CERTs, law enforcement practitioners and the private sector.
- Support programmes that allow for active participation and contribution of Greece to the European Cybercrime Centre at Europol (EC3).
- Foster awareness-raising and information campaigns on cybercrime.
- Increased cooperation with EU Member States and Europol.

3.7 Radicalisation towards terrorism and violent extremism

Greece and the Commission agreed that actions aiming at fighting terrorism, and in particular anti-radicalisation measures, should be a priority under the ISF. Both sides acknowledged the need for a comprehensive approach comprising preventive, operational and repressive measures, making maximum use of new technologies, as well as promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Enhanced awareness of the phenomenon of radicalisation among frontline practitioners.
- Increased know-how to prevent, recognise and tackle the phenomenon of radicalisation.
- Establishment of partnerships and platforms for knowledge and exchange of information and experience between practitioners and stakeholders, based on the experience of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN).
- Support initiatives challenging terrorist propaganda, including initiatives promoted by victims of terrorism.

3.8 Protection of National Critical Infrastructures

Greece and the Commission acknowledged the importance of critical infrastructure protection and the need to give priority, under the ISF, to initiatives pursuing such objective, including measures promoting an effective partnership framework that fosters integrated, collaborative engagement and interaction among public and private-sector partners and supports the development of centralized structures to collect and process vast amount of data from heterogeneous sources.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Strengthen administrative and operational capability to protect critical assets.
- Increase security capabilities specific to terrorist crises in view to enhance preparedness and response capabilities in case of terrorist attacks to critical infrastructures.
- Maintain a high level of societal resilience and increase preparedness through advanced risk assessment.

3.9 Participation of Greece in EU policy cycle on serious and organised crime

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need for the country to increase its participation in the Policy Cycle, being directly concerned by many of its priorities. Greece and Commission agreed that activities related to such Policy Cycle should be a priority under ISF.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Increased engagement of Greece in the new Policy Cycle 2014-2017 especially regarding the following SOCTA (Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment by Europol) recommendations: illegal immigration, where Greece is a transit country, drugs trafficking, cybercrime as well as MTIC² and excise fraud.
- Reinforcement of national capacities and infrastructures for data collection and analysis concerning international organised crime, as well as their transmission to Europol, which are precondition for EU Member States' participation in policy cycle.
- Align the national legislative framework with the other EU Member States, reinforce international cooperation, notably with international trade companies, creation of a network of information for the detection of counterfeited product sources.

3.10 Implementation of the EU Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS)

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority, under the Internal Security Fund, to the implementation of the EU Law Enforcement Training Scheme (LETS).

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Improve cross-border law enforcement cooperation.
- Improve a cross-border minded culture of law enforcement officers through training.

² Missing Trader Intra Community (MTIC) fraud, in other words VAT fraud.

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION FUND (AMF)

1. Common European Asylum System

Greece and the Commission agreed that support to the implementation and development of a Common European Asylum System should be a clear priority under the Asylum and Migration Fund. Such measures, in order to be implemented according to a multi-annual strategic planning, should take duly in consideration and build on the actions identified in the framework of Greece's revised Action Plan on Asylum and Migration and the technical assistance provided by the Task-Force Greece.

The need to identify certain indicators was also discussed: while acknowledging that the issue of common indicators was still being discussed in the framework of the on-going negotiations on the AMF, Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to adopt also "qualitative indicators" that allow to assess quality/policy changes.

1.1 Addressing the deficiencies of the national asylum system: Assistance to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection / Reception and detention facilities.

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to prioritise under the Asylum and Migration Fund the strengthening of the open reception capacity and living conditions for asylum seekers, notably by establishing additional open reception centres (detention measures should be applied only where necessary and for the shortest period of time, following an individual examination of each case).

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Use of structural funds for increasing open accommodation capacities (refurbishment). EASO and EU Task-Force Greece can provide technical assistance on the preparation of the relevant project proposals. AMF should be used for covering operational costs.
- Adequate reception conditions ensured to all asylum applicants, including under Dublin procedures.
- Ensure appropriate conditions (e.g. food, clothing, medication, interpretation, legal assistance) for detainees and that detention is applied only where necessary and for the shortest period of time, after an adequate individual examination of each case.
- Medical screening is ensured for detainees in every detention facility and access to the necessary free health care and treatment provided by appropriately trained personnel.
- Ensure training of police officers on the EU and international rules on detention and human rights.
- Setting up of a system to monitor the standards and capacity, in particular of detention conditions (e.g. via the Ombudsman), to ensure that detention conditions are up to the standards prescribed under EU law and in respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Setting up a communication strategy which will include measures to raise awareness on the specific situation of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection thus improving their image amongst Greek citizens.
- Take measures (e.g. feasibility study - pilot project- procurement) aiming at developing an e-ID based system, as a centralized management information tool.
- Reinforce and streamline the institutions and procedures targeting especially the protection of vulnerable groups.
- Ensure proper reception, care and education to unaccompanied minors who are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection, and establish, as a matter of urgency, procedures in the best interest of the child, as preconized by the Commission Action Plan on unaccompanied minors 2010-2014.

1.2 Ensure the fairness and sustainability of the asylum procedure and the quality of asylum decision making process

Greece and the Commission agreed that, building on recent achievements such as the establishment of the new Asylum Service and the new Appeals Authority, the improvement of quality and speed of asylum procedures, with special attention to vulnerable groups, and the establishment of a national system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of those procedures, should be the priorities for funding under the AMF.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Ensure that all third-country nationals / persons in need of international protection have effective access to the asylum procedure, by establishing additional asylum offices and registration places for asylum claims, as described in Law 3907/2011, and in compliance with the Asylum Procedures and Reception Conditions Directives.
- Improvement of the quality and speed of the asylum decision-making procedure and clearance of backlog of pending asylum requests accumulated under the previous system, notably through adequate financial support for the operation of the Appeal Committees (including funding for interpretation).
- Training of officials in relevant competent authorities on EU and international law in the area of asylum, as well as on the use of country of origin information (COI), notably in cooperation with EASO.
- Ensure access to legal assistance and representation.
- Institution of guardianship is reformed, applying Directive 2013/32 and 2013/33.
- Establishment of a national system of continuous evaluation of the asylum procedures and assistance provided to asylum seekers.
- Stronger partnership with civil society.

2. Integration of third country nationals (including beneficiaries of international protection)

2.1 Increased effectiveness of integration measures / Development of effective policy on legal migration taking into account the needs of national labour market

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority under the Asylum and Migration Fund to the strengthening of the integration of third-country nationals (TCN), including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, in accordance with the European Agenda for Integration. Consistency and good coordination of the activities developed by local, regional and national administrations, as well as other stakeholders, in particular civil society organisations, is acknowledged as absolutely essential. Greece and Commission also agreed on the need to find synergies with other funding sources, in particular the European Social Fund, which is the adequate EU instrument to support activities directly facilitating access to the labour market (e.g. vocational training).

The need to pay special attention to vulnerable groups was also acknowledged. Greece and the Commission agreed also on the need to support pre-departure measures (language tuition, civic orientation, training enhancing employability in the Member State) for TCNs in the countries of origin, with the Commission noting that extra funding might be provided for such activities, notably as Specific Actions under the AMF.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- In accordance with the European Agenda for Integration, development of a national strategy on integration and legal migration promoting the implementation of policies supporting the integration of third-country nationals, including beneficiaries of international protection.
- Enhanced capacity to deal with integration issues and diversity, especially among NGOs, TCN associations and civil servants, as well as for policy evaluation for integration.
- Support to initiatives that provide useful information to TCN and beneficiaries of international protection and give them the means to defend their rights.
- While maintaining, as appropriate, a horizontal approach at the national level, particular attention should be paid to regional and local approaches, enhancing co-ordination between different governance levels and strengthening the involvement and capacities of local authorities and the cooperation between competent public bodies, NGOs and other actors.
- Enhanced social cohesion and migrants' cultural integration into the Greek society by reducing xenophobia and promoting tolerance.
- Enhanced culture of acceptance and understanding towards TCN and beneficiaries of international protection among the Greek society, to be achieved also through the development of a communication strategy that increases awareness and counters the negative perceptions of TCN, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

3. **Return Policy**

3.1 **Effective return policy - Strengthening of voluntary return, improvement of return procedures and detention conditions, and establishment of an effective forced return monitoring system**

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to give priority under the AMF to the pursuance of an effective return policy, through the strengthening of voluntary return and of an effective forced return monitoring system. AMF funding should also be used to improve conditions in detention centres, in full compliance with the Return Directive.

Both sides agreed that good cooperation with third countries, notably in the framework of Mobility Partnerships, is absolutely essential for an effective and efficient return policy. In this context, return and reintegration projects and actions strengthening third countries' capacities to implement EU readmission agreements are important. It is noted that actions involving several EU Member States would have a stronger impact and that extra funding could be provided through the AMF for such type of Specific Actions. Synergies between the national programmes and Union Actions, implemented through direct management, as well as with other EU funding sources such as external aid instruments - which are the main source of funding of activities in third countries - should also be sought, in view of avoiding a fragmented approach and ensuring always an EU dimension in such actions in third countries.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Stronger commitment from Greece to use voluntary returns, including provision of information on the programmes and conditions of return and promotion of reintegration measures in the countries of origin.
- Effective cooperation with Third Countries as regards the issuance of travel documents for all TCNs being repatriated.
- Reduce the number of irregular TCN placed in detention centres by speeding up the return procedure (deliverance of travel documents from third countries) and by developing alternatives to detention (e.g. open accommodation centres for voluntary returns).

- Support to the improvement of living conditions (food, clothing, medication, interpretation, legal assistance, medical screening, free medical health care, etc.) in the detention centres, ensuring that detention is applied only where necessary and for the shortest period of time, in full conformity with the Return Directive.
- Speed up removal process by increasing the staff in charge of planning the voluntary /forced return of irregular migrants in the Greek administration/police and by further improving the cooperation with countries of origin or transit in order to increase the number of irregular TCN effectively returned and reintegrated.
- Organization of educational and training programs related to: a) deportation procedures, b) readmission of TCNs, c) special treatment of vulnerable groups, d) protection of human rights.
- Ensuring efficiency and credibility of the forced return monitoring system.
- Substantial strengthening of the Deportation Department of Aliens Division, in order to ensure the efficiency of (forced and voluntary) returns.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT OF MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES OF GREEK ADMINISTRATION TO ENSURE ADEQUATE MANAGEMENT OF EU FUNDING IN THE AREA OF HOME AFFAIRS

Greece and the Commission agreed on the need to substantially improve the management capacities of the Greek administration in order to ensure adequate management of EU funding, notably by designing a Responsible Authority, ensuring effective internal coordination between the different stakeholders (ministries and services), ensuring the adequate staffing of authorities involved in the implementation of the Funds (both managing authorities and public beneficiaries), as well as a reliable and efficient management and control system adapted to the new requirements of the future Funds.

In this context, both sides agreed that, also to identify possible staff shortages, Greece would prepare a flowchart, which would be further discussed with the Commission, clearly describing the different authorities involved in the management of EU funds. Greece agreed to prepare such flowchart and discuss it with the Commission soon. Greece and the Commission also agreed on the need to improve the procurement capacity of the Greek authorities, in particular as regards the implementation of the Internal Security Fund, to avoid the problems with delays and low absorption capacity experienced by Greece with the External Borders Fund (EBF).

The Commission recalled also that full coherence will need to be ensured with funding from other EU financial instruments, in particular the European Structural and Investment Funds and, as far as actions in third countries are concerned, the EU external aid funds.

The importance of the partnership principle was also acknowledged, as well as of an adequate communication strategy to inform European citizens about the measures being promoted at EU level.

Desired outcome/funding priorities:

- Effective management structure (legal and institutional aspects) in place as of 2014.
- Significant improvement of administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management of EU Funds (managing authorities and beneficiaries), including as regards internal coordination and staffing.
- Significant improvement in procurement process, especially of its preparatory stages (multiannual planning, drafting of technical specifications, preparation of tender documents, etc.).

II. OTHER ISSUES

Intentions for Specific Actions under the AMF and ISF-borders

Several of the Specific Actions under the AMF and ISF-Borders could be of potential interest to Greece, in particular:

- Joint return operations, including joint actions for the implementation of readmission agreements concluded by the Union and enhanced participation in FRONTEX Joint Return Operations;
- Cooperation with the UNHCR regarding access to asylum procedures, in protection programs for specific groups, or in certain procedures for examining applications for asylum;
- Joint projects of reintegration in countries of origin, joint actions to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of third countries in the implementation of readmission agreements with the EU and continuity of the projects regarding the voluntary return carried out by IOM;
- Setting up consular cooperation mechanisms between at least two Member States resulting in economies of scale as regards the processing of applications and the issuing of visas at consulates in accordance with the principles on co-operation laid down in the Visa Code, including common visa application centres.

Union Actions / Emergency measures / EU Agencies

The Commission briefly recalled the possibilities and additional funding available under Union Actions and invited Greece to provide input for possible actions with an EU dimension. It was noted that it would be important to avoid duplication and ensure good coordination with Union Actions and actions supported through other EU funding sources such as the external aid instruments.

It was also noted that, under the new Home Affairs Funds, a substantial envelope will be available to support emergency measures, thus better equipping the EU to cope with unforeseen events which require a quick response.

The need for Greece to further work with EU agencies, in particular Home Affairs agencies, in a more strategic manner, was also highlighted.

Next steps

It was agreed that Greece's draft national programme for both Home Affairs Funds should be informally submitted to the European Commission by March 2014.

Composition of delegations

Greece

Chair - Mr Patroklos GEORGIADIS - Secretary General of Civil Protection, Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection

- [REDACTED]

On Greece's side, the meeting was also attended by a high number of representatives from the different ministries, agencies and other stakeholders, including representatives from some international organisations.

European Commission

Chair - Mr Stefano Manservigi - Director General Home Affairs

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