

EC makes a proposal to implement 54,000 places allocated for refugees

EU-Turkey agreement

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USPA NEWS - European Commission makes a proposal to implement EU-Turkey agreement: 54,000 places allocated for resettlement of Syrians from Turkey. Following Friday's agreement between the EC and Turkey, the Commission is adopting a proposal to relocate people in need for international protection of refugees.

With this amendment, 54,000 places which were foreseen for relocation will now be available for the purpose of resettling Syrians from Turkey to the EU. The proposal responds to the need to commit further places for resettlement from Turkey, following Friday's agreement to resettle one Syrian from Turkey for every Syrian readmitted by Turkey after arriving irregularly in the Greek islands. This 1:1 scheme aims to quickly replace irregular flows of migrants travelling in dangerous conditions across the Aegean by an orderly and legal resettlement process.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos said: "With the agreement reached with Turkey on Friday, we are offering asylum seekers a credible alternative to putting their lives at risk on dangerous sea routes. Member States now need to honour their commitments and ensure an orderly, well managed and safe arrival and admission to Europe for persons in need of international protection in Turkey."

In order for the scheme to function, EU Member States must make a sufficient number of resettlement places available, within the framework of their existing commitments. The proposal would amend the relocation decision to make it possible for Member States to meet their humanitarian commitments by admitting Syrians to their territories directly from Turkey. The number of resettled Syrians would be deducted from Member States' relocation quotas.

This proposal complements the existing EU resettlement scheme for 22,504 people which was agreed in July 2015, of which 18,000 places remain available. Using the existing relocation commitment for the purpose of resettlement is fully in line with the Commission's existing policy, since these efforts are concrete expressions of solidarity among Member States and to third countries that are experiencing a mass influx of migrants. The 54,000 places foreseen for reattribution from the relocation to the resettlement scheme constitute the currently non-allocated reserve of commitments under the existing Council Decision.

In 2015 the Commission took decisive action to help address the refugee crisis that EU Member States and neighbouring countries are facing. For the first time in the history of European migration policy, the Commission proposed two Council decisions to relocate 160,000 people in clear need of international protection from Member States under extreme pressure to other Member States of the European Union "" showing concrete solidarity between EU Member States. 54,000 out of the 120,000 committed places available under the second relocation decision have not yet been allocated under this scheme.

At the same time, with a view to addressing the global migratory crisis comprehensively and to show solidarity with third countries equally affected, the Commission recommended an EU resettlement scheme, which was followed by an agreement among the Member States of 20 July to resettle 22,504 persons in clear need of international protection. Following the EU Leaders' Summit with Turkey on 29 November 2015, the EU-Turkey Action Plan was adopted. A voluntary humanitarian admission scheme is one of the important tools of the plan, aiming at supporting Turkey in dealing with the increasing amount of refugees, as well as at offering a safe and legal way to come to Europe for the persons in real need of protection.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com