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EU Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism reaches half-way mark



On 5 February, 31 asylum seekers matched by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) were relocated from Greece with the support of IOM. Together with the European Commission, the EUAA and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) have now facilitated the relocation of over 4 000 asylum seekers from the five EU countries bordering the Mediterranean to other EU+ countries, in an example of practical European solidarity.

Since the signing of the Declaration on Solidarity under the French Presidency of the Council in June 2022, involving 21 EU+ countries, which established a European Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism (VSM); the EUAA has been working closely with the asylum and reception authorities of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain to help implement it on the ground.

These efforts have now reached a key milestone as over 4 000 applicants have been relocated from the Mediterranean to 12 EU+ countries. With this development, over half of the number of pledged relocations have been carried out. The EUAA plays a crucial role in enabling the implementation of the VSM, with deployed personnel focussing on:

- **Helping identify and provide information** to applicants that are potentially eligible for relocation;
- **Matching relocation candidates** with available pledges, according to national criteria – for example by giving priority to vulnerable applicants and those with family or cultural ties;
- **Supporting selection missions, as well as holding candidate interviews** with representatives of the pledging EU+ countries' national protection authorities;
- **Working closely with the Dublin Units** in some Member States, to help implement the legal transfer of responsibility for applicants to the pledging Member State.

The Voluntary Solidarity Mechanism is only made possible due to the combined efforts of the EUAA, the European Commission – responsible for coordinating national relocation pledges – and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which helps implement the physical transfer of candidates to the Member State that will ultimately take the decision on their asylum application.

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