

First tripartite political meeting ahead of Transparency Register negotiations

Political representatives from the European Commission, Parliament and Council met today to exchange views on the state of play regarding the proposal for an inter-institutional agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register. The three EU institutions agreed on the political importance of this issue and underlined their commitment to increase the transparency of interest representation, and thus of the EU decision-making process, through a clear and comprehensive framework for representation activities within their respective institutional autonomy.

The meeting was organised on the initiative of the Estonian Presidency of the Council. The Commission and Parliament welcomed the initiative as a positive step and indicated their readiness to start negotiations as soon as possible.

Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“In the Commission we provide full transparency with regard to lobbyists who talk to us. The public has the right to know who tries to influence the EU decision-making process. Now it is time for the Parliament, Council and Commission to jointly agree to set up a mandatory Transparency Register, as proposed by the Commission. We can achieve this if all of us apply the simple principle that the Commission is already implementing: if a lobbyist is not on the Register, then he or she won’t get a meeting with a Commissioner, an MEP or the Council Presidency. We look forward to starting the negotiations as soon as possible.”*

Background

The Commission submitted its proposal for an Inter-institutional Agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register on 28 September 2016. The proposal aims to strengthen the framework for a transparent and ethical interaction between interest representatives and the three institutions participating in the new scheme; the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union. Since 2011, the Commission and Parliament jointly operate a public register for interest representatives aimed at increasing the transparency and accountability of the EU decision-making process. The Council is an observer to the current scheme since 2014.

On 15 June 2017, the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament, bringing together the EP President and political group leaders, approved the Parliament’s negotiating mandate, following endorsement by an EP contact group made up of representatives of all the political groups. The EP mandate underlines the need for a strong transparency message from the three Institutions and a meaningful outcome of the negotiations.

European Agenda on Migration: Press Conference by Commissioner Avramopoulos on the progress made on managing migration and external borders

Dear all,

Migration continues to be one of the main preoccupations of the European Union and its citizens today. But as the reports we are presenting today clearly show, the difference between now and just two years ago, is like night and day.

While we still have many challenges ahead of us, both now and in the long term, we have already made enormous progress – achieving more in the past two years than what was possible in the twenty before it.

We are going towards a situation where we are structurally managing migration and our external borders, not just dealing with a crisis.

In Italy for example, arrivals in August this year dropped by 81% compared to the same month last year. And they dropped 66% just between July and August this very summer. This also reflects the positive work we have done along the Central Mediterranean Route with all partners involved, including first of all the authorities of Libya and Niger.

In Greece, the number of arrivals continues to represent a drop of around 97% since the entry into force of the EU-Turkey Statement. We have seen a slight increase over the summer, but this trend is not different than the usual seasonal changes like last summer.

Of course we must remain vigilant.

The EU-Turkey Statement continues to work and deliver results. More than 8,800 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey under this scheme since April 2016, including more than a thousand Syrians since the last reporting period.

So far in fact, since July 2015, the European Union has resettled more than 22,500 people in need of protection, not just from Turkey but also from countries like Lebanon and Jordan. This is a significant increase in resettlements compared to previous years, and it shows the value and success of joint EU efforts.

I have recently written to all Member States to encourage them to continue and be even more ambitious on resettlement, and also to focus more on the countries along the Central Mediterranean Route, in particular: Egypt, Libya, Niger, Ethiopia and Sudan.

In addition, we have made considerable progress on better managing our external borders everywhere. The roll-out of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency has continued over the past months with two additional operations launched to assist Spain in the Western Mediterranean, where we have seen some increases in arrivals recently. Right now, more than 1,700 European Border and Coast Guard officers from all over Europe are on the ground, patrolling Europe's external borders, at land and at sea – this is European solidarity in action!

We have also made progress on return. Since the beginning of this year, more than 8608 illegally staying third-country nationals have been returned, with the support of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

But it is time that both the Agency and the Member States fully assume and use the Agency's new mandate on return.

Also in our cooperation with third countries, we have made progress on readmission, with for example Guinea and Gambia, and most recently with Bangladesh. Our approach on using all leverages, collectively as a Union, has clearly produced results in this cooperation, and shows the way forward.

We need to be bolder and collectively build a European return system.

Finally, I wish to conclude on the solidarity that we have shown within Europe so far through relocation. Not only have we reached an average of 2,300 relocation transfers per month since February 2017, we have now achieved almost 28,000 relocations from Italy and Greece.

There is however some misunderstanding that by now Member States would have been obliged to relocate more than 100,000 persons from Greece and Italy. But with the EU-Turkey Statement reducing irregular flows to Greece by 97% and the majority of migrants arriving in Italy not being eligible, in reality, the number of persons to be relocated has turned out to be much lower.

That does not change the fact that there are still several thousand people eligible to be relocated, from Greece and in particular from Italy, who will have arrived before 26 September. And the obligation to do so for Member States does not stop after that.

Let me be clear: the success of the relocation scheme will be measured against whether or not Member States relocate everyone eligible in Greece and in Italy.

Today, the European Court of Justice has confirmed the relocation decision. And more specifically, that:

- there was indeed an emergency situation characterised by a sudden inflow of displaced persons in Europe;

- the measures that we proposed through relocation are appropriate to address the situation: meaning, to help Greece and Italy cope with the impact of the migration crisis.

Now, there is no time to waste: all Member States should now focus on delivering on the relocation commitments.

Over the past two years, there has been some criticism and scepticism towards our comprehensive migration policy. But today we see the clear and effective results of a collective and joint Union policy on migration.

I call on all Member States and all our partners to continue delivering and building on the progress achieved to manage our borders, to provide protection to the most vulnerable, and to ensure that responsibility is shared fairly between Member States.

Because this is what solidarity looks like in practice.

[New National Member for Malta at Eurojust](#)

□*The Hague, 06 September 2017*

Philip Galea Farrugia was appointed National Member for Malta in July 2017.

After obtaining his Doctoral degree in Law from the University of Malta in 2001, Dr Galea Farrugia set up his private law practice in Valletta, during which time he worked in a number of legal fields and appeared as defence counsel before a variety of courts and tribunals. After providing prosecution services (on a contractual basis) for a few years before the Commissioners for Justice and local tribunals, Dr Galea Farrugia decided to dedicate his full attention to prosecution.

In fact, in 2010, he relinquished his private law practice completely and joined the Office of the Attorney General in Malta, where he furthered his specialisation in criminal law and prosecution. He was lead prosecutor on numerous trials by jury, including trials concerning homicide, sexual offences, drug trafficking, and violent crime. Today, he occupies the Office of Assistant Attorney General and Head of the Criminal Law and Prosecution Unit. He has represented Malta and the Office of the Attorney General in international fora, conferences, and seminars, mostly dealing with criminal law matters.

Upon arriving at Eurojust, Dr Galea Farrugia said: *'I am pleased and honoured to join my fellow colleagues at Eurojust at a time when serious cross-border crime is on the increase and becoming more and more complex and organised As*

Head of the Criminal Law and Prosecution Unit, I fully appreciate Eurojust's mission in supporting and strengthening coordination and cooperation between national investigating and prosecuting authorities, particularly in relation to serious cross-border crime.. As National Member for Malta, I can now actively participate and contribute towards this mission, together with my Deputy and Assistants. I look forward to this new challenge and to proactively contributing to ongoing judicial cooperation on European and international levels.'

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**90/2017 : 6 September 2017 – Judgment
of the Court of Justice in Case
C-413/14 P**

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