

Managing migration: Commission expands on disembarkation and controlled centre concepts

Following the call by EU leaders at the June European Council, the Commission is today expanding on the concept of controlled centres as well as short-term measures that could be taken to improve the processing of migrants being disembarked in the EU, and giving a first outline of the possible way forward for the establishment of regional disembarkation arrangements with third countries. Regional disembarkation arrangements should be seen as working in concert with the development of controlled centres in the EU: together, both concepts should help ensure a truly shared regional responsibility in responding to complex migration challenges.

Commissioner **Avramopoulos** said: *“Now more than ever we need common, European solutions on migration. We are ready to support Member States and third countries in better cooperating on disembarkation of those rescued at sea. But for this to work immediately on the ground, we need to be united – not just now, but also in the long run. We need to work towards sustainable solutions.”*

‘Controlled Centres’ in the EU

To improve the orderly and effective processing of those disembarked in the European Union, EU leaders have called for the establishment of ‘controlled centres’ in the EU. The primary aim would be to improve the process of distinguishing between individuals in need of international protection, and irregular migrants with no right to remain in the EU, while speeding up returns.

The centres would be managed by the host Member State with full support from the EU and EU Agencies and could have a temporary or ad-hoc nature depending on the location. The main features of such centres are:

- **full operational support** with disembarkation teams of European border guards, asylum experts, security screeners and return officers, and all costs covered by the EU budget;
- **rapid, secure and effective processing** that reduces the risk of secondary movements and accelerates the process to determine the status of the person concerned;
- **full financial support** to volunteering Member States to cover infrastructure and operational costs; as well as financial support to Member States accepting transfers of those disembarked (€6,000 per person).

To test the concept, a pilot phase applying a flexible approach could be launched as soon as possible.

The Commission will also provide a central contact point to coordinate among Member States taking part in solidarity efforts – as an interim measure until a fully-fledged system can be established in the context of the ongoing Common European Asylum System reforms.

See the factsheet on controlled centres in the EU [here](#).

Regional Disembarkation Arrangements

In addition to the establishment of controlled centres, EU leaders have called on the Commission to explore the concept of regional disembarkation arrangements in close cooperation with IOM and UNHCR and in partnership with third countries.

The objective of regional disembarkation arrangements is to provide quick and safe disembarkation on both sides of the Mediterranean of rescued people in line with international law, including the principle of *non-refoulement*, and a responsible post-disembarkation process.

The main features of regional disembarkation arrangements are:

- **Clear rules for all:** To reduce deaths at sea and ensure orderly and predictable disembarkation, all coastal states in the Mediterranean should be encouraged to establish search and rescue zones and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs);
- Developed by the UNHCR and IOM who will help ensure those disembarked can receive protection if they are in need of it, including through resettlement schemes; or will be returned to their countries of origin if they are not, including through the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes run by the IOM;
- **Partnerships on an equal footing:** work with interested third countries will be brought forward on the basis of existing partnerships and offered support tailored to their specific political, security and socio-economic situation;
- **No pull factors:** resettlement possibilities will not be available to all disembarked persons in need of international protection and points of reception should be established as far away as possible from points of irregular departure;
- **No detention, no camps:** Regional disembarkation arrangements mean providing a set of established procedures and rules to ensure safe and orderly disembarkation and post-disembarkation processing in full respect of international law and human rights;
- **EU Financial and logistical support:** The EU is ready to provide financial and operational support for disembarkation and post-disembarkation activities as well as for border management with equipment, training and other forms of support.

See the factsheet on regional disembarkation arrangements [here](#).

Next Steps

Ambassadors meetings tomorrow, 25 July, are expected to discuss the concept

of controlled centres in the EU and the possibility of rapidly using an interim framework for disembarkations of those rescued at sea in the EU.

The work on regional disembarkation arrangements will also be touched upon at tomorrow's meeting and is expected to be taken forward at a meeting with the IOM and UNHCR in Geneva 30 July 2018. Only once a common EU approach is agreed will outreach be made to interested third countries.

Background

The European Council in its conclusions of 28-29 June invited the Council and the Commission to swiftly explore the concept of "regional disembarkation platforms, in close cooperation with relevant third countries, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)".

The European Council also called for the development of 'controlled centres' on EU territory – a new approach based on shared efforts for the processing of persons who, following their rescue at sea, are disembarked within the EU.

For more information

[Non-paper on 'controlled centres' in the EU](#)

[Non-paper on regional disembarkation arrangements](#)

[Factsheet on 'controlled centres' in the EU](#)

[Factsheet on regional disembarkation arrangements](#)

[European Council conclusions, 28 June 2018](#)