

European Council on Refugees and Exiles

Annual General Conference 2019

And UNHCR Europe NGO Consultation

Organised by ECRE and UNHCR

Brussels, 23 and 24 October 2019

Venue: Renaissance Brussels Hotel, Rue du Parnasse 19, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Madrid Room

WORKSHOP 3 with ReSOMA

AN AGREEMENT ON DISEMBARKATION?

Title	An Agreement on Disembarkation?
Objectives	<p>The workshop, organised in collaboration with ReSOMA, will aim to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide an update on the disembarkation plan agreed by Germany, France, Italy and Malta on 23 September 2019 and follow up discussions in the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 8 October 20192. Critically assess and reflect upon the elements of the disembarkation plan3. Discuss ideas and ways to expand relocation opportunities to more countries, including Greece, Spain and Cyprus
Speakers	<p>Chair</p> <p>Morten Kjaerum, Director Raoul Wallenberg Institute and Chair of ECRE Board</p> <p>Speakers</p> <p>Kahin Ismail, UNHCR Representative, UNHCR Malta</p> <p>Roberto Cortinovis, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)</p> <p>Karl Kopp, PRO ASYL</p> <p>Corina Drousiotou, Cyprus Refugee Council</p>

Description and structure

Following lengthy negotiations within the Council of the EU in 2019 on “temporary arrangements” for relocation of persons disembarked on Member States’ ports, an initiative led by four Member States (Germany, France, Italy, Malta) over the summer resulted in a Ministerial Meeting in Valletta on 23 September 2019.

The declaration adopted by the four countries in Valletta sets out a “more predictable and efficient temporary solidarity mechanism”, foreseeing inter alia relocation of asylum seekers disembarked in Italian and Maltese ports within a maximum of four weeks. The workings of the mechanism appear to be flexible enough to allow Member States to continue relocating according to their established practices e.g. following selection interviews for France.

The Finnish Presidency held an EU-level discussion of the agreement at the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council on 8 October 2019 with a view to encouraging more Member States to participate in the mechanism.

Beyond the distribution of asylum seekers following disembarkation in the Central Mediterranean, civil society has called for relocation to be introduced for other countries such as Spain, Cyprus and Greece, which are facing particular challenges in providing adequate reception to newly arrived applicants. Cyprus has officially submitted a request to the European Commission and Member States for the relocation of 5,000 asylum seekers. Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria presented an initiative at the JHA Council of 8 October 2019, urging the EU to provide support to Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Agenda

- 11:30 – 11:35 Introduction
Morten Kjaerum, ECRE
- 11:35 – 11:50 A view from Malta: why a plan is needed
Kahin Ismail, UNHCR Malta
- The disembarkation plan: An assessment
- 11:50 – 12:05 Roberto Cortinovis, CEPS / ReSOMA
- 12:05 – 12:20 Karl Kopp, PRO ASYL
- 12:20 – 12:35 Q&A and discussion
- 12:35 – 12:50 Relocation beyond the Central Med: The case of Cyprus
Corina Drousiotou, Cyprus Refugee Council
- 12:50 – 13:00 Q&A and discussion



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