



## Migration: Commission and Greece agree joint plan for a new reception centre in Lesbos

Brussels, 3 December 2020

Today, the Commission agreed a detailed plan with Greek authorities and EU agencies to establish a new, up-to-standard reception centre on the island of Lesbos by early September 2021. This is a key step towards resolving the situation after the fires that destroyed the Moria camp in September. It is the result of the work of the European Taskforce set up at that time. The memorandum signed today sets out the respective responsibilities and areas of cooperation between the Commission, the Greek authorities and EU agencies. Today's agreement comes in addition to €121 million in EU funding granted to Greece last month for the construction of 3 smaller reception centres on the islands of Samos, Kos, and Leros, also to be completed by September 2021.

Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"With our agreement today, Europe and Greece are working hand in hand for the people on the islands. We will bring decent conditions to migrants and refugees who arrive, as well as supporting the communities on the Greek islands. It is also about fast and fair procedures, so the centres are what they should be – only a temporary stop before either return or integration. Managing migration is a European challenge and today we are putting European solidarity into practice."*

Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva **Johansson** said: *"This is about people and their basic right to feel safe. This agreement is an important step towards a sustainable solution in Lesbos and in making sure that a situation like Moria can never happen again. It is also an important step in changing how we approach migration management and it paves the way for bringing into practice the guiding principles of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum."*

### A durable solution for Lesbos

In September, the Commission announced a [European Taskforce](#) to address the emergency situation in Lesbos, based on the principles of the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). Today's agreement sets out the following areas of cooperation between the Commission, the Greek authorities and EU agencies:

- **Development and construction of a reception centre** designed to provide adequate conditions and to operate with swift, fair and effective procedures. The centre will have a living area with containers, a specific area for newly arrived people to help them through the first days, medical containers for immediate health care, recreational spaces for sports, playgrounds and prefabricated houses for formal and non-formal education. Common kitchens will allow to prepare food and shops will serve basic needs. Special rooms will be set up for people with disabilities.
- **Improved management of arrivals** with full reception and identification procedures including health and security screening in a specifically set up area.
- Seamless **asylum and return procedures and integration measures** to ensure that nobody is left in protracted uncertainty. Assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes will be promoted for people who do not have the right to stay in the EU, but a detention area will also be established in the multi-purpose centres to support effective return. People in need of international protection will be better supported to start their integration process.
- **Reception conditions in line with EU law** taking into account international standards and best practices, notably with regard to health, security, sanitation, food, information provision and counselling, clothing and non-food items, and common areas. A gender-based and child-rights approach will be followed taking into account the needs of families and children (both accompanied and unaccompanied) while ensuring that vulnerabilities are adequately identified and addressed.
- Adequate **staff training, capacity and planning**, including risk assessment and contingency planning, to ensure the smooth operation of the new centre.

## Background

The memorandum of understanding is one of a number of actions supported by the Commission to address the emergency situation following the fires in the Moria camp, in particular its former residents who found themselves without shelter. 12,362 people in the Moria camp were immediately affected. Today, 7,200 men, women and children are hosted in a temporary site.

The Commission announced a dedicated Taskforce to improve the situation on the island in a durable way. The Taskforce helps provide overall guidance to develop a solution to the situation in Lesvos.

Since its creation, the Taskforce operates at the temporary site to help improve conditions for the people accommodated there. The Taskforce works in close collaboration with EU Agencies and international organisations on the ground. Regular Steering Committees monitor the progress of ongoing work. The Taskforce has also been focusing on identifying and preparing an appropriate site for the new reception facilities together with the Greek authorities and relevant stakeholders.

A more detailed overview of the Commission's support in managing the situation on the Greek islands is available in the [Q&A](#).

## For more information

[Memorandum of Understanding](#)

[Q&A Commission support for Greece](#)

[Factsheet Financial support to Greece](#)

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