

Joint Report Expert Meeting on Greek-Netherlands cooperation Athens, July 13th and 14th 2009

On July 13th and 14th 2009, in Athens, Greek and Netherlands experts (see annex I) met to explore the possibilities of cooperation in the field of migration and asylum. Discussions were held in a constructive and friendly manner. Opportunities of bilateral cooperation, as well as the better use of existing multilateral frameworks, were discussed. It was agreed that, where possible, existing structures and available European funds, could be used to further set up the cooperation. Following the meeting, a joint press release was issued (see annex II).

To bring further the first initiatives discussed during the meeting and to exchange experiences, the Greek authorities were invited by the Netherlands authorities for a study visit to the Netherlands in the early fall (September/October). During this study visit the topics on the agenda will i.a. be the (accelerated) asylum procedure, the use of Country of origin Information (CoI) in asylum decisions, reception centres, border control, document checks, identification procedures, anti fraud measures and returns/readmission.

Bilateral Cooperation

- In the context of the asylum procedure, cooperation will be set up on the following topics:
 - Age assessments: investigations will be made on the possibility to make electronic x-rays in Greece which can be forwarded to the Netherlands for examination;
 - exchange of experience on the composing of CoI-reports, and the use of CoI in making asylum decisions;
 - exchange of experience on accelerated procedures.
- Possibilities will be explored to set up a joint programme for voluntary returns, with IOM and, if possible, with other European Member States;
- Greek and Dutch authorities will set up the use of the FADO/PRADO system on the work floor for document checking in the context of Greek border control. Also, Greece will start using the EDISON/DISCS system;
- According to Greek needs, the Netherlands will supply equipment for document investigation in the framework of Frontex cooperation and operated by Dutch guest officers;
- Greek authorities will provide training in the field of asylum procedures to approximately 600 officials in the coming months. The Netherlands will contribute to the intended Greek training programme with expertise on interviewing techniques, on acquisition of information on countries of origin, and on asylum procedures in general;
- An inventory will be made for the modus operandi used by illegal migrants for intra-Schengen traffic between Greece and the Netherlands. According to this inventory, a seminar in Athens will be organised for airline staff and Greek and Netherlands police authorities.

Multilateral Cooperation

- It was suggested to the Greek authorities to participate in the ENARO network of European asylum reception organisations. The Netherlands authorities will provide information on the cooperation within this network. Holding the international secretariat, the Netherlands reception organisation (COA) will make sure an invitation to participate in the exchange programmes of ENARO is being forwarded in due time

- to the Greek counterparts;
- Greece and the Netherlands will cooperate within the GDISC network of immigration directors. Especially, the GDISC interpreters' pool will be used within the identification process in Greece. Also, Greece could consider to participate in the Temporary Desk Iraq;
Within the GDISC network Greece might benefit from participation in the High Level Working Group on Particular Pressures. The Netherlands will offer their services mentioned in the GDISC Catalogue;
- In the context of the Frontex cooperation Greece could benefit from participating in trainings on document investigations on all levels of expertise.

Timeframe

- The Netherlands authorities (IND) will send a training expert on interviewing techniques and asylum procedures to contribute to the training of Greek officials in the field of asylum. Starting with the intended Greek training programme on the 31st of July, a Dutch expert will contribute. Subsequently, according to the needs, other Dutch experts will contribute to the Greek training programme throughout the fall.
- The Netherlands delegation invited the Greek authorities to pay a study visit to the Netherlands in september or october 2009, to exchange experiences with their Dutch counterparts. The programme of this visit will contain the topics of asylum procedures, reception centres, voluntary return, cooperation with countries of origin, the acquisition of information on countries of origin, border control and anti fraud measures. In the context of this visit various facilities in the Netherlands will be visited.
- In the second half of 2009:
 - The Greek authorities will further define their needs for the purpose of the supply of equipment for document investigation in the framework of Frontex cooperation by the Netherlands side;
 - Greece and the Netherlands aim towards concluding a joint programme for voluntary returns with IOM. To this effect, both sides will determine the scope and focus of this programme. Competent authorities from both sides will therefore set up a meeting with IOM representatives;
 - The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and the competent Greek counterpart will cooperate in implementing the FADO/PRADO system in the Greek identification process of migrants;
 - Greek and Netherlands authorities will also strengthen cooperation in the use of the EDISON/DISCS system;
An inventory will be made for the modus operandi used by illegal migrants for intra-Schengen traffic between Greece and the Netherlands. According to this inventory, a seminar in Athens will be organised for airline staff and Greek and Netherlands police authorities.

Annex I – Press release

On July 13th and 14th Greek and Dutch experts met in Athens to enhance practical cooperation in the field of migration and asylum. This meeting was a follow up of the visit by the Netherlands Vice-Minister of Justice, responsible for migration, Ms Nebahat Albayrak to Greece in May 2009. The meeting was jointly chaired by the Secretary General of Public Order of Greece, Mr. Constantinos Bitsios, and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr. Kees van Rij. During the expert meeting best practices were shared and proposals were made for joint initiatives to be undertaken. In particular, cooperation will

focus on further improving the identification process in relation to the asylum procedure and measures to improve border control. Cooperation between Greece and the Netherlands within Frontex and GDISC was also agreed. Further meetings to implement this cooperation will take place in the following months.