

Beat: News

European Commission - Statement

Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner

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USPA NEWS - Statement from Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos regarding the situation in Calais. We are facing a migratory crisis of extraordinary proportions that is very much linked to the conflicts occurring in the wider periphery of Europe.

Dimitris Avramopoulos -

Today I held constructive and friendly bilateral exchanges with both French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and with UK Home Secretary Theresa May, who updated me on the situation in Calais and the measures they are taking to address it.

Above all, I would like to welcome the strong cooperation between both countries on this issue.

I outlined the support the Commission is able to offer ““ for instance, the European Asylum Support Office is able to help with the processing of asylum applications and the European Borders Agency, Frontex, can help identify and register migrants, collaborate with countries of origin and transit to speed up the issuing of travel documents for return, and coordinate and finance joint return operations.

I also confirmed that the Commission will now disburse the first instalment of €20 million in national funding under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for France. The Commission has already granted the UK a pre-financing of about €27 million. This comes from the total of over €266 million earmarked for France and over €370 million earmarked for the UK for the period covering 2014-20.

At this stage, neither France nor the UK have requested additional assistance and I have full trust in their ability to manage the situation.

More generally, the situation in Calais is another stark example of the need for a greater level of solidarity and responsibility in the way we deal with migratory pressures in Europe; it is one piece of a bigger puzzle that requires a broad set of responses.

We are facing a migratory crisis of extraordinary proportions that is very much linked to the conflicts occurring in the wider periphery of Europe.

That is why we all need to do more. We must act in a united way to address a challenge that surpasses national boundaries.

Greater effort also need to be made to cooperate with third countries of origin and transit, particularly on returns and readmission agreements ““ an area where working collectively at EU level is crucial. I expect concrete results from the summit with African countries that will take place in Valletta on 11-12 November. European response on migration is better, addressing all parts of the chain ““ from the immediate need to save lives to working on root causes with partner countries, fighting against traffickers and making returns more effective, as well as a long term strategy on strengthening our asylum system and borders. This is what the Commission set out in the Migration Agenda adopted in May, which is starting to be implemented.

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