

Announcement regarding family reunifications as provided for in Dublin III Regulation

In response to references in social media, blogs etc., in relation with family reunification as provided for in Dublin III Regulation, the Asylum Service notes the above:

-The number of the asylum applications for which Greece can send a request to take charge, including for family reunification reasons depends on refugee flows. More specifically, regarding the number of people being in the Greek mainland, who participated in the preregistration program - which was completed in the end of July 2016 – and could benefit by the provisions of family reunification, and based on the complete registrations of these asylum applications, it is estimated that 5579 persons of the preregistered population applied for family reunification (20% of the preregistered refugee population).

-Respectively, 67% of the preregistered population applied for the relocation program. Therefore, any information stating that the percentage of family reunification cases among the preregistered population amounts to 50%, is false.

-It was impossible for anyone to know the number of persons that were eligible for family reunification application, regarding the period March 2016 until June 2016. The appointments for full registration are programmed in accordance with language and interpreter availability, not according to the type of procedure. One of the main goals of the preregistration procedure was the identification of the family reunification cases and of course of the persons that are considered vulnerable, like the single parent families. Many mothers with children, as well as unaccompanied minors belong in this category, and their applications were fully registered on September 2016.

-The procedure followed, in order to send a request to other Member-States for family reunification reasons, is done, strictly by chronological order of the full registration, with the exception of certain extremely vulnerable cases (for example a family member's serious health problems), and taking always into account the deadlines. It is a fact that even though the number of asylum applications is enormous and disproportionate for our country, our Service has never missed a deadline (deadline to send a request to take charge or transfer). However it is obvious that the Asylum Service cannot give absolute priority to the family reunification cases at the expense of regular asylum procedure or the relocation procedure, because all the asylum applicants have the same rights and the same

needs so that their asylum application examination will be completed as fast as possible.

-Regarding whether the Greek Asylum Service is obliged to communicate with the Member State authorities before a transfer, even in the case of voluntary transfers (i.e. when the applicants pay for the costs of their transfer), as defined in par. 24 of the explanatory memorandum of Dublin Regulation, except the loyal cooperation with our peers in other EU countries, **the wording of the Regulation and its interpretation as given by the European Committee, does not leave any room for misinterpretation, i.e. that the communication is necessary.**

Athens, 8th of June 2017