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## **Commission selects and support projects to tackle challenge of irregular migration.**

***The Commission helps Malta, Italy, Greece, Sweden and Spain in coping with reception challenges of irregular maritime immigration and the influxes of Iraqi asylum-seekers. Projects have now been selected for funding under the Call for Proposals "Assistance to Reception Challenges".***

Franco Frattini, Vice President and Commissioner responsible for issues related to Justice, Freedom and Security, stated that: "The result of the Call for Proposals for "Assistance to Reception Challenges" is a success and shows the importance of Community support for Member States experiencing significant migration pressure on their asylum systems. The projects to be co-financed will represent a concrete example of co-operation between Member States and burden sharing in order to deal more effectively with the challenges of illegal immigration."

This new budget line for 2007 was voted in December 2006 by the European Parliament in order to finance a number of actions in the area of migration which are complementary to the general framework programme entitled 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' for the period 2007-2013, and which have the potential to provide additional answers to the challenges posed by migratory flows.

The indicative amount available for this call for proposals is € 7.000.000.

One Maltese project has been selected as a pilot project for upgrading the facilities in the reception centres through the coordination of existing services and the provision and development of social welfare services, skills training and communal activities. The EU co-financing is around €310.000.

The Phase III of the Italian project "Praesidium", of which Phase I and II were co-financed by the Commission, has been selected. It will consolidate reception capacities in Lampedusa, Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria, Apulia and Rome acting in partnership with UNHCR, IOM, Italian Red Cross and Save the Children Italia ONLUS. The project intends to enhance Italy's response capacity to arrivals of mixed population flows such as economic migrants, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. Specific attention will be given to the latter category as well as to victims of trauma. This project will be co-financed for an amount of about €1.000.000.

Two projects have been selected to help Sweden cope with the influxes of Iraqi asylum seekers with activities such as ensuring an efficient reception and management of Iraqi asylum application, developing and running a new comprehensive initial asylum handling procedures for Iraqi asylum applicants and launching an Iraqi support desk. The two proposals will be co-financed for an amount of about € 3.500.000.

A Greek project called "Aegeas" has also been selected to enhance reception capacity for migration flows at border areas of Greece – External EU maritime and land borders. In cooperation with UNHCR, it aims to do so through the improvement of practices and exchange of know-how, in coping with the increased and unpredicted irregular migration via the country's maritime borders and the increase in the numbers of Iraqi asylum seekers in general. The co-financing for Greece amounts to about € 420.000.

The rest of the available amount will support Spain in providing an adequate response to the massive arrival at the Canary Islands and the coast of Andalusia of undocumented migrants. It will provide new reception centres in the Canary Island and in Grenada and supply the migrants with means of subsistence, medical and language assistance in ten reception centres.