Evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis

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The Commission presents an assessment of Greece's action plan to remedy the serious deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external border.

In accordance with the roadmap agreed by the EU Heads of State or Government on the temporary reintroduction of internal border controls, the Commission presented a communication on re-establishing **the normal functioning of the Schengen area**. It set out measures to address deficiencies in the management of the EU's external borders. The roadmap showed how the procedures laid down in the Schengen rules could be used to restore order to the functioning of the Schengen system before the end of the year 2016. Among those measures is the presentation of an action plan by Greece to implement the recommendations made by the Council to address deficiencies identified in border management. This report is another stage in the process: a Commission assessment of the action plan presented by the Greek authorities.

Assessment of the Greek action plan: in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013, which establishes an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis, an evaluation of the application of the situation in Greece was carried out in November 2015. On 2February 2016, the Commission adopted the evaluation report, based on on-site visits, which revealed **serious deficiencies in the carrying out of external border control by Greece.**

The communication sets out the Commission's assessment of the **adequacy of the action plan presented by the Greek authorities on 12 March 2016,** to remedy the serious deficiencies identified in the evaluation report.

Since the situation on the ground in Greece is constantly changing, consideration has also been given to new developments such as the implementation of relevant aspects of the EU-Turkey joint action plan, and the implementation and functioning of the hotspot approach in Greece that are regularly reported on in the progress reports of the Commission.

Accordingly, the present report assesses the adequacy of the Action Plan presented by the Greek authorities on the basis of the facts currently available, and does not prejudge the assessment of the second report by the Greek authorities, which will follow.

The action plan presents the remedial actions already taken and those envisaged in order to implement the Council's roadmap:

- **as regards the adequacy of the action plan on substance, timing and financing of the proposed actions**, the Commission considers that for several actions **more details and/or clarifications are needed**, in order to properly assess and monitor the timely follow-up and implementation of the actions proposed. These elements are also necessary to fully inform the European Parliament and the Council as provided by the Regulation;
- **in general terms**, the Commission concludes that **significant progress has been made by Greece.** However, the Greek authorities need to make **further improvements to the action plan in order to comprehensively address the deficiencies identified in the November 2015 evaluation.** They should, in particular, provide more clarity in terms of timing, responsibility and financial planning.

Moreover, some actions cannot yet be considered adequately addressed or completed. The Commission requests Greece provide these additional elements and clarifications by 26 April 2016 and offers its continuous assistance in line with the spirit of the Commission communication "Back to Schengen – a Roadmap".