Malta to host next MED5 Summit

In a statement issued by the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, Byron Camilleri, the Government announced that Malta will be hosting the next MED5 Summit after agreement was reached by Ministers during the MED5 Summit held in Italy.

In a meeting attended by the Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment which was held in Naples, Italy, and also attended by ministers responsible for home affairs and migration of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain. Discussions focused on the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the external dimension of migration and returns. The meeting was also attended by the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration, Magnus Brunner, and the Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens. Minister Camilleri noted that Malta made great improvements in recent years to address the challenges brought about by irregular migration, including the increase in resources for competent national authorities, investment in returns and creating contacts with third countries. He stated that last year Malta registered a 93% decrease in the number of irregular arrivals when compared to five years ago, while the rate of returns increased considerably year after year.

The Minister emphasised that there is a direct relationship between the number of irregular arrivals and the rate of return while he noted how these efforts will continue to be strengthened through the implementation of the Pact. However, he also noted that with the Pact the MED5 countries are taking on significant responsibilities, and therefore there is need to ensure that the challenges that Mediterranean frontier countries face, are considered. The Minster further emphasised the importance of innovative solutions since methods used in the past did not unfortunately yield the necessary results. He emphasised the importance of return centres in third countries for persons who do not qualify for asylum and he stated that this would be an innovative method to effectively remove incentives for economic migrants who come to the EU in an irregular manner.

He welcomed the Commission’s proposal on the Return Regulation launched in March, which amongst other things expands the definition of country of return to allow, in a clear manner, the establishment of return centres in third countries, the introduction of obligations for those who are to be returned to cooperate with the authorities and clear consequences in the case of lack of cooperation.

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