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Out of scope

Monthly report

Personal data

FLO name	[Redacted]
Countries	Italy and Malta
Date of reporting	27 September 2024
Reporting period	September 2024

Key messages:

- [Redacted]

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Weekly Panorama publishes details related to IT/AL agreement.

While in September the Italian government has not issued any official information about the implementation status of the IT – AL agreement, on 20 September the weekly Panorama published a lengthy article claiming to have gained access to the leaked SOPs by the IT MoI related to the identification procedures and to the construction progress of the Gjader reception centre in Albania (full summary in annex 1).

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ANNEX 1

Panorama weekly publishes an article about the IT/AL agreement

It also quotes a protest group 'NO CPR' (no reception centres) which announced its intention to block parts of the 20 km long road leading from the Albanian port of Shengjin where the migrants will be disembarked, to the Gjader centre. The group filmed the centre using a drone and published its images online. The protest groups seem to be quoting the statement of a Rome-based judge Silvia Albano who, at a meeting with NGOs on 17 May, claimed the Italy-Albanian protocol is 'illegal'. The group seems to be mobilising such NGOs as MSF, Sea Watch, SOS Humanity, Mission Lifeline, ResQ as well as several political groups in protests likely to start as soon as the first group of migrants will be transferred to Albania.

According to the article, the Gjader centre which cost the IT authorities 670 million EUR for the period of 5 years, is completed except for some ongoing plumbing works. Carabinieri are already present at the venue to ensure security. While the IT/AL agreement foresees a maximum of 3000 migrants present in Albania as a whole, 1150 are to be accommodated in Gjader only.

The centre will employ about 500 staff including penitentiary police, carabinieri and identification and registration officers, and will also have 24 detention cells for violent individuals in case of riots. PM Meloni countered the criticism of high costs of the centre stating that the annual cost of the centre (EUR 134 million) will "merely amount to 7,5% of all expenses related to migrant reception facilities in Italy".

According to the accelerated decision procedure, allegedly described in the leaked SOPs, migrants rescued by IT Coast Guard on international waters are to be transferred on the private hub-vessels, where rescued migrants will undergo pre-screening with the aim to identify migrants coming from safe countries (as defined by the decree of the IT Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Only the latter will be eligible for transfer to Albania – these include Bangladesh, Tunisia and Egypt which feature among the top nationalities arriving to Italy. Once arrived in Albania, within 48 hours a Rome-based judge will have to validate the decision on administrative detention of the migrant, and within 28 days a decision is to be issued on whether a migrant is entitled to international protection (and therefore admitted to Italy), or to be repatriated back to their country of origin.

Women, minors, migrants with visible disabilities and elderly will not be transferred to Albania. The opening of the centre has been postponed numerous times so far, the latest delays are seemingly related to discussions over the compliance of the screening procedures on board of the private "hub vessels" with EU directives. According to Panorama, the contract with one such vessel has been signed and the latter is to be operational already in the second half of September. It is relevant to note that Rome – based judge Silvia Albano has been vocal in assessing the IT – AL agreement as being in violation of EU directives and UN conventions, and since the IT vessels are to be considered IT territory, transferring the migrants to Albania could amount to pushbacks.