

Key messages to be transmitted to possible applicants for international protection disembarking in Lampedusa re: voluntary relocation procedure under VSM

What is voluntary relocation?

- Voluntary relocation is a procedure that allows the voluntary transfer of applicants for international protection rescued at sea from one Member State (e.g., Italy) to other Member States.

How does it work?

- During the **registration** of the applicant's request for international protection (through the so-called c/3 form), the registration officer will ask some **additional questions** to find out if the applicant has any link with one or more Member States (i.e., has any family members in the European Union or have any linguistic, cultural or social ties with one or more Member States).
- Based on the information the applicant provides during registration and the availability of Member States, they **might be included in the list of applicants proposed to a Member State**.
- Once the proposed list has been accepted, representatives of the Member State can organize **additional interviews** with the applicant in order to better evaluate the possibility of proceeding with their transfer.
- Following the additional interviews with a Member State (if applicable), if they confirm the possibility for the applicant to be relocated, the authorities will always ask **the applicant for their final consent to be transferred** to the identified Member State.
- If the applicant consents, they will be transferred to the identified Member State, **with the support of IOM and free of charge**.
- **In case the applicant is not included amongst those to be transferred or does not accept to be transferred**, their request for international protection will be examined in Italy by the competent determining authority (the local Territorial Commission), which will decide whether to grant them protection or not.

Applicant's rights and duties within the procedure:

- If the applicant **leaves the reception centre without justification**, they might lose the opportunity to participate in the voluntary relocation procedure and the examination of their application for international protection might be suspended.
- If the applicant travels independently to another Member State, they will be staying there irregularly. If they apply for international protection in another Member State, they can be sent back to Italy. This is known as the 'Dublin procedure'.
- It is the applicant's duty and in their best interest to **cooperate** with the authorities, telling the **truth** and sharing all the relevant **documents and information**.
- The applicant should **report if they have any vulnerability and/pr specific needs** to the staff of the reception centre and/or the registration officer, in order to allow the identification of the appropriate reception or procedural measures.
- An **interpreter** will be available, if necessary. The applicant should inform the authorities if they do not understand the official or the interpreter.
- The applicant has the **right to be informed**. The officer who will register their application will inform them about their rights and duties and about each step of the procedure.
- Everything the applicant declares within the procedure is protected by the **principle of confidentiality**: the information shared cannot be disclosed or transmitted to the authorities of their country of origin.