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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Ombudsman's human rights initiative regarding European forced returns of third country nationals**

**The creation of an independent mechanism for the external control of forced returns of third country nationals at European Union level has been decided in Nafplio by independent authorities from ten Member States.**

The aim of the new independent mechanism shall be to uphold fundamental rights and ensure the transparency and legitimacy of the operations in question, as well as of the accountability of those involved.

The meeting on May 22 and 23 at the venue of the Centre for Hellenic Studies Harvard University in Nafplio, was organised on the initiative of the Greek Ombudsman Andreas Pottakis in cooperation with his counterparts from other Member States with the support of the Council of Europe.

Representatives of independent authorities from Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain and Council of Europe officials participated.

Two preparatory meetings had been held, the first in Nafplio, in October 2018 and the second in Athens in February 2019, as well as informative meetings between Andreas Pottakis and representatives of European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament) and Agencies ( Frontex, FRA).

**Information:** 213 1306600, [press@synigoros.gr](mailto:press@synigoros.gr)