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Frans Timmermans  
Vice-President of the European Commission  
Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of  
Fundamental Rights

Dimitris Avramopoulos  
Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship

Brussels, 08 March 2018

*Dear Vice President,  
Dear Commissioner,*

I wish to bring to your attention allegations about a possible medical visa racket carried out by a former Health Ministry official in Malta, Mr. Neville Gafa, who is accused of charging Libyan citizens seeking medical treatment in Malta a total amount of EUR38.000 to issue the visas. Mr. Gafa has been appointed, in the meantime, to work in the Office of the Prime Minister and as Projects Director in the Health Ministry of Malta.

According to media reports, more than 600 medical visas allowing Libyan citizens to travel to Malta for medical treatment were issued in the first half of 2015, a striking number compared with the 252 visas issued in 2011.

Furthermore, Mr. Ivan Grech Mintoff, who exposed the case in 2016, claims that 88,000 Schengen Visas were issued by the Maltese Embassy in Libya.<sup>1</sup> The case was brought to the knowledge of the Maltese government at the time, and the matter was referred to the Attorney General and the Maltese Police. After carrying out a preliminary investigation, the police did not find enough evidence to prosecute - which is not surprising, considering the findings of the European Parliament ad hoc Mission to Malta<sup>2</sup>, and lack of appetite of Maltese police to press charges against people linked to the government (as the report of the European Parliament ad-hoc Mission to Malta notes).

Mr. Gafa denies all accusations, despite the publication of mounting evidence, such as receipts issued and Viber conversations, which indicate his involvement.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/68964/police\\_invite\\_ivan\\_grech\\_mintoff\\_to\\_share\\_information\\_on\\_alleged\\_medical\\_visas\\_racket](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/68964/police_invite_ivan_grech_mintoff_to_share_information_on_alleged_medical_visas_racket)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.anagomes.eu/PublicDocs/2d19cdc7-57ef-4287-9c64-8e8cc295f1a7.pdf>



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Mr. Khaled Ben Nasan, the intermediary between the Libyan patients and the Maltese government, and who blew the whistle on the case, faces criminal charges of fraud and extortion in Malta, brought by Mr. Gafa. He, in turn, instituted court proceedings against Mr. Gafa, for failure to return EUR 36,675 that, Mr. Ben Nasan claims, were paid to Mr. Gafa for visas and treatments in Malta that never took place in the end.

More recently, another alleged racket case came to light<sup>3</sup>, after a Tunisian family facing deportation from Malta told the Immigration Appeals Board that they were asked for thousands of euros to be allowed to remain in the country. According to media reports, Mr. Gafa was also referenced in this case, and a police investigation is taking place.

Given that these cases bring light into possible severe breaches of rules concerning the entry of third country national into the Schengen area, which might harm the integrity of the Schengen system and affect the security of the European Union, I urge the Commission to

- a) carry out an investigation, analysing the statistics and evidence which has been brought to public knowledge;
- b) enquire Maltese authorities on steps taken to establish the truth about these allegations, ensure that the procedures to grant visas to third country nationals are duly followed and to punish exemplarily those found involved in engineering any kind of criminal activity and breaches of the Schengen visa system.

*Best regards*

*Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes  
Member of the European Parliament

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/84053/neville\\_gafa\\_named\\_in\\_fresh\\_migrant\\_documentation\\_racket\\_media\\_reports](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/84053/neville_gafa_named_in_fresh_migrant_documentation_racket_media_reports)