



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
ALTERNATE MINISTER OF INTERIOR
& ADMINISTRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION**

To
Mrs Ana Gomes
European Parliament
ASP 14G205
60, rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

**Athens, 15 September 2016
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cc.

S&D Members of the LIBE Committee in the EP
Mr D. Avramopoulos, Commissioner on Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship
Mrs Costanca Urbano de Sousa, Portuguese Minister of Interior
Mrs Maria Stavropoulou, Director of the Greek Asylum Service

Dear Mrs Gomes,

I am sorry I have to come back once more on the issue you repeatedly put to your colleagues in the S&D Group in the EP disseminating wrong information about the Greek services' effectiveness and our willingness to support the most vulnerable groups of refugees and migrants, among the approximately 47.000 actually in the mainland Greece of whom 7.751 are already eligible to relocation and stand ready to be transferred to other EU countries.

We maintain an exemplary collaboration with the Portuguese Government and Services and my relation with the Minister of Interior, Mrs Costanca Urbano de Sousa, has always been excellent. We are very thankful to Portugal for figuring amongst the four countries that have relocated more than 10% of their allocation under the Council decisions. By now, Portugal has accepted 748 persons out of 764 requested. More than 400 persons have already departed and the rest are gradually departing for Portugal. Recently, Portugal submitted another 400 requests to the Greek authorities but I must clarify that these cannot be exclusively attributed to Yazidis in respect to the fundamental values of the EU and specifically for reasons of non-discrimination.

Under the Council decisions especially (EU)2015/1601 "When deciding which applicants in clear need of international protection should be relocated from Italy and from Greece, priority

should be given to vulnerable applicants within the meaning of Articles 21 and 22 of Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (1). In this respect, any special needs of applicants, including health, should be of primary concern. The best interests of the child should always be a primary consideration.” In art. 21 of Directive 2013/33/EU vulnerable groups comprise “minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation”.

I am sure you realise that there are different groups special attention has to be attributed to. Amongst those but not exclusively are equally the Yazidis. If a community or certain groups are privileged to the detriment of others we are not only in breach of the EU law but we equally create tensions amongst the refugees’ population actually in Greece.

If in any case the European Parliament is ready to take this responsibility, I would ask you to take the initiative of providing the Greek Government with an official decision by the EP’s LIBE Committee or possibly the S&D Group?

I would like to reassure you that the Greek Government is doing anything within our possibilities to protect the Yazidis community. We have moved them from one reception facility to another when they felt threatened and we are actually refurbishing a site so that all Yazidis from the three different sites where they actually reside can be placed together. In a meeting I had with Mrs Nadia Murad on August 18 in Athens I informed her about our efforts and reassured her that we treat Yazidis in the same favourable way as we do with all vulnerable groups.

I am convinced that if we work according to the law, avoiding to create impressions to our credit and without taking advantage of these persons’ delicate psychological situation we shall manage to gradually relocate them along with other persons who urgently need to be admitted in other countries.

Sincerely yours,

Ioannis Moutzalas

