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October 6, 2016

H.E. the Greek Alternate Minister of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction  
Mr Mouzalas,

Many thanks for the letter conveyed to my office. I would like to clarify that my intervention in this process, articulated with my colleague MEP Joseph Weidenholzer, is completely independent from the Portuguese government.

In direct response to your appeal, we would like to point out that the S&D Group and the chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament strongly support and take up responsibility for the decision to relocate the Yazidi Group from Greece to Portugal.

We understand the concern of the Greek authorities to not discriminate against anyone but it is obvious that we need to start the relocation process somewhere and that the most vulnerable groups must be treated with priority. As you pointed out, the Yazidi community is among the groups to which special attention has to be attributed. Besides, the particular group of Yazidi people who were at Idomeni have already been identified and we have sent a list of names in Arabic to all authorities involved. We are also told they have been pre-registered in your system.

And, obviously, among this group you find many individuals meeting the "special needs applicants" description that you and art. 21 of Directive 2013/33/EU quote: there are among them many "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".

Do not hesitate if there is anything we can do to help accelerate the process of relocation for these 470 Yazidis already identified as wishing to relocate in Portugal.

Best regards,

Claude Moraes, Chair of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament

Josef Weidenholzer, Vice-chair of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

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