

11.03.2020

Dear President of the European Commission,
Dear President of the European Council,

Following increased arrivals at the EU borders over the past week, about 13,000 people have gathered along the Greek-Turkish land border. At the same time, there are currently over 42,000 people on the Greek islands, among these approximately 5,500 unaccompanied minors.

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) welcomes as a first step, announcements that Commission's efforts will focus on voluntary relocation of unaccompanied children. However, the LIBE Committee notes with concern the lack of reference to large-scale relocation as one of the most immediate actions to be undertaken, in favour of both the local communities and the asylum seekers, through the provision of the announced additional financial support to Greece and calls for the adoption of prompt relocation measures for asylum seekers, prioritising the processing of relocation procedures for those in a vulnerable situation, including children with their families, unaccompanied children and young women and girls.

Furthermore, the LIBE Committee recalls in particular the EP position with regard to the reform of the Dublin Regulation. This position was confirmed by the new Parliament and LIBE would like to urge Council to put forward a position on a fair and sustainable distribution mechanism for those arriving in the EU and to enter into negotiations with Parliament as co-legislator and to call on the Commission to include a sustainable and fair relocation and solidarity mechanism for persons arriving in the European Union in its planned relaunch of the reform of asylum rules pursuant to Article 78(2) TFEU.

Finally, in its Action Plan on measures to support to Greece of 4 March, the Commission announced additional financial support for Greece of up to €700 million. The Action Plan specifies that €350 million is immediately available "*to support border and migration management, in particular to support increased reception capacity, voluntary returns and the infrastructure needed to carry out screening procedures for health and security*". Further details are required as to where the additional funds will be transferred from and for what purpose.

The Action Plan announces that the Commission will propose an amending budget to make available a further €350 million. In light of the above, in line with Parliament's budgetary powers, the need to prioritise relocations of asylum seekers, and without prejudice to Parliament's position on the Commission's announcement, the Commission should inform the LIBE Committee immediately when it intends to propose the draft amending budget concerning the mentioned €350 million euro and for what purpose.

We seek urgent commitment from the Commission and Council to ensure a prompt and support for Greece, including through a substantial relocation of asylum seekers of all ages to ensure that reception capacities in Greece are decongested and we call upon the Commission and the Council to proceed with the immediate reform of the Dublin Regulation.

Yours sincerely,

Juan Fernando López Aguilar

Copy:

Commission Vice-President SCHINAS,

Commissioner JOHANSSON,

President SASSOLI

Johan VAN OVERTVELDT, Chair of BUDG Committee