



Groupe de l'Alliance progressiste des
Socialistes & Démocrates
au Parlement Européen

**Délégation de la gauche sociale et
écologique française**

Brussels, Friday March the 6th 2020

Dear Commissioner Johansson,

The French delegation is shocked and deeply concerned about the dire reception conditions of thousands of refugees at the Turkish-EU border. Most of them are migrants fleeing from the war and the bombing of their hospitals, schools and villages; it is unbearable to see them mistreated while they only seek protection. The international law must apply in every situation, everywhere in the EU, at and beyond its borders. Currently, migrants have been denied their right to apply for asylum, which is a violation of the Geneva Convention.

This crisis is the result of a failure of EU Member States to come up with a sustainable solution for years. The Council has irresponsibly blocked the expected revision of the Dublin Regulation as well as of six Regulations and Directives on this matter since 2016 despite strong and comprehensive proposals by the European Parliament. We are today facing the consequences of a clear lack of political will and cowardice.

The French delegation calls for immediate solutions in order to protect migrants. Together with our political family, we call for *“the EU to open urgent humanitarian corridors for refugees trapped in Greece, with priority to unaccompanied minors, families with children and the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers”*.

We do not see Greece as the “shield of Europe” as declared by Ursula Von der Leyen during her visit there. Given the use of such terms, we feel the need to recall that refugees do not represent any “threat” for the EU, but rather urge us to take our shared responsibility. We see the European Union as a wealthy continent that is perfectly able to host with humanity and dignity the most vulnerable women, men and children, as commanded by international law.

In the perspective of the forthcoming release of the new migration pact, we take the opportunity of this letter to remind you what, in our opinion, the agenda of the European Commission on this matter should contain.

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We call for a reform of the Common European Asylum System, which creates a relocation mechanism that insures the respect of the solidarity principle amongst Member states. Relocation has to be systematic and mandatory in order to be efficient. This is the only way to address the mismanagement of migration flows and to ensure solidarity with Member States at EU borders: under a relocation scheme, migrants will not be trapped in Greece or Italy and the pressure on these national authorities will be alleviated.

The French delegation will strongly oppose any attempt to consider retention centres at our external borders as the solution. Some Members States - and we deeply regret that France lays amongst them - keep pushing for security-based agenda only, which undermines the protection of fundamental rights. We call on the European Commission to refrain from following this path.

It is your task as a Social Democrat to act responsibly and humanely. Please be insured that our delegation will support your efforts and fight along your side for the release of a migration pact focused on human rights, dignity and solidarity.

With sincere regards,

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