



YLVA JOHANSSON

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HOME AFFAIRS

Rue de la Loi, 200
B-1049 Brussels
Tel. +32-2 295 01 70
cab-johansson-contact@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, 18. 12. 2020

Ares(2020)SV 8484304

Dear Director,

Thank you for your letter to the President and Vice-President of the European Commission who has asked me to reply on their behalf. I agree with you that the conditions in the Moria Reception and Identification Centre were unacceptable. I can assure you that the Commission's goal is to prevent similar situations from happening again and to offer migrants dignified living conditions in line with EU law and standards.

The Commission established a dedicated Taskforce that, together with the Greek authorities, is working as a priority on a joint pilot project to improve the situation on Lesbos. In this respect, the Commission, together with EU Agencies and with the support of interested Member States, works with the Greek authorities to better manage migration and asylum processes and to set up new reception facilities on the island that will take into account the different profiles, vulnerabilities and needs of the migrants. I have recently concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Greek authorities to take this forward.

In parallel, there are ongoing works to further improve the living conditions for the approximately 7 200 residents of the temporary Mavrovouni site, which was created to host the former residents of Moria. All tents have been adapted to sustain adverse weather conditions, drainage works continue, heating devices are being installed as well as water, sanitary and hygiene facilities are being upgraded. The works to improve the conditions in Mavrovouni are expected to finish in the coming weeks. Commission staff deployed on the ground report that food and water are provided at sufficient quantities and that the medical staff of the Greek National Organisation for Public Health together with medical staff of non-governmental organisations and the World Health Organization adequately cover the needs for medical care of

Ms Leilani Farha

Global Director, The Shift

E-mail: leilani@maketheshift.org

the residents of Mavrovouni. As of 11 December 2020, there were 10 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Mavrovouni, all isolated in the quarantine area of the site. I can also confirm that the Greek authority for geological and mineral exploration has taken samples of the soil in the Mavrovouni area to analyse them and assess whether the site is safe for its residents. At the same time, the asylum procedure for the island's applicants for international protection continues at a steady pace to ensure that the applicants receive a decision within the timelines set by the law. Moreover, since 28 September 2020, more than 2 700 vulnerable asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have been transferred from Lesvos to the mainland, while voluntary relocations of unaccompanied minors, sick children with their families, vulnerable asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection from Greece, including from Lesvos, to other Member and associated States continue. The EU also funds the increase of appropriate reception capacity in the mainland including apartments for the more vulnerable cases.

Migration management is a European issue, which needs a European solution. This is why the Commission proposed the New Pact on Migration and Asylum on 23 September 2020. The New Pact addresses all elements needed for a comprehensive European approach to migration. It sets out improved and faster procedures throughout the asylum and migration system and sets in balance the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility. This is crucial for rebuilding trust between Member States and confidence in the capacity of the European Union to manage migration.

The Commission will continue assisting Member States in addressing the challenges they face in managing migration. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum provides a unique opportunity to take a comprehensive view on how to make migration management sustainable and how to give tangible expression to the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility.

Yours sincerely,



Ylva Johansson