

## **Urgent Call to Action from Civil Society Organisations across Europe**

### **MORIA FIRES: European Governments must urgently relocate displaced individuals from Greece**

Over the past days devastating fires<sup>i</sup> burnt down the Moria Registration and Identification Center and surrounding areas, the EU Hotspot on the Greek island Lesbos. The fires have left thousands of vulnerable individuals homeless and traumatised,<sup>ii</sup> among them over 4,000 children.<sup>iii</sup>

**The undersigned organisations reiterate their call on the governments of EU Member States, with support from the European Commission,<sup>iv</sup> to urgently relocate displaced individuals from Greece.**

While we are shocked and saddened at these developments, they come as no surprise. Lesbos and the other EU Hotspots<sup>v</sup> on the Aegean islands have reached breaking point long ago.<sup>vi</sup> Moria camp is currently hosting roughly 12-13,000 displaced individuals, with an official capacity of only 2,800. These severely overcrowded camps are characterised by squalid living conditions and a critical lack of adequate sanitation or hygiene facilities, even amid the heightened health risks due to Covid-19.<sup>vii</sup> The situation in the other Greek Hotspots is similarly untenable and repeated warnings<sup>viii</sup> have remained unanswered for over four years.

#### *Relocation urgently needed*

We welcome the transfer of 406 unaccompanied children from Lesbos to the Greek mainland, with financial support from the European Commission.<sup>ix</sup> This demonstrates how swiftly transfers can be co-ordinated when the political will exists. We commend the Norwegian and Dutch governments' commitments to relocating 50<sup>x</sup> and 100 individuals<sup>xi</sup> respectively, as well as the French and German governments' willingness to transfer 400 children.<sup>xii</sup> We urge further European governments to follow with concrete commitments and action without delay. The positive example set by relocations carried out by the coalition of willing Member States since March 2020<sup>xiii</sup> shows that relocations can be carried out safely and successfully for everyone involved. Member States, EU institutions, relevant EU and UN agencies with support from civil society should now share experiences, expertise and resources to ensure further states join the coalition. The undersigned organisations stand ready to support these efforts, to bring the men, women and children stranded in Greece to safety, and thereby uphold our European values of human rights and human dignity.

#### *The EU Hotspots as an EU Migration Management Approach*

The latest events prove once again the failure of the Hotspots as the default EU migration management approach. We call on the European Parliament to investigate the role that the EU and Member States played in the failed management of Moria. Moreover, we urge the European Commission, the German EU Council Presidency and Member States to treat the horrifying images of Moria burning as unequivocal proof of the tragic human cost<sup>xiv</sup> of an EU asylum and migration system based on containment and deterrence policies. We strongly recommend the European Commission to take these events into account with a view to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and ensure the same policies do not inform the extremely concerning proposals for 'processing centres' at EU borders. It is vital that the New Pact is taken as an opportunity to present a new start rather than a replication of past errors.

**Signed by:**

Action Aid Hellas (Faces of Migration partner)  
ACV-CSC Belgian Trade Union ASGI  
Ambrella Slovakia (Faces of Migration partner)  
Better Days  
BPID Bulgaria (Faces of Migration partner)  
Caritas Europa  
Caritas Hellas  
Caritas Slovakia  
Češi Pomáhají (Czech Republic)  
Child10 (Sweden)  
Child Circle  
Consortium of Migrants Assisting NGOs (Czech Republic)  
COSPE Onlus  
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)  
Defence for Children International  
Defence for Children International – Belgium  
Defence for Children International - Greece  
Defence for Children International – Italia  
Defence for Children – The Netherlands  
Destination Unknown  
Diaconia ECCB (Faces of Migration partner)  
Diakonie Austria  
Dirty Girls Lesvos  
Društvo Bodi Svetloba (Slovenia)  
Dutch Council for Refugees  
Dynamo International – Street Workers Network  
Echo100Plus  
Eurochild  
Eurodiaconia  
Europe Must Act  
European Lawyers in Lesvos  
European Network on Statelessness  
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)  
Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid  
FOCSIV - Italian Federation of Christian NGOs Italy (Faces of Migration partner)  
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) (Faces of Migration partner)  
Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)  
Help Refugees  
Human Rights League Slovakia  
ICMC Europe  
Immigrant Council of Ireland  
INPADE/ FOCO (Foro Ciudadano De Participacion Por La Justicia Y Los Derechos Humanos)  
Intereuropean Human Aid Association (IHA)  
International Child Development Initiatives (NL)  
International Rescue Committee (IRC)  
INTERSOS  
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)  
Kopin  
Lighthouse Relief (LHR)  
LUMOS Foundation  
Mareena Country Slovakia  
Médecins du Monde Belgique  
Médecins du Monde – France  
METAdrasi (Action for Migration and Development)  
Minority Rights Group International  
Missing Children Europe  
Mobile Info Team  
Mokosha NGO Centre

Movimento per l'Autosviluppo, l'Interscambio e la Solidarietà (MAIS) (Italy)  
Nadácia Milana Šimečku (Slovakia)  
Network for Children's Rights (Greece)  
Office of Displaced Designers  
One Happy Family Lesbos  
Organization Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire/ World Organization for Early Childhood Education  
Oxfam  
Pakistan Development Alliance / GCAP-Pakistan  
PAX  
Pax Christi Vlaanderen  
PICUM  
Plate-Forme Mineurs en Exil - Platform Kinderen op de Vlucht  
Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD – Portuguese NGDO Platform  
Povod Slovenia (Faces of Migration partner)  
Refugee Legal Support (RLS)  
Refugee Rights Europe  
Refugee Youth Service  
Slovak Humanitarian Council PRAKIS  
Solidarity Now  
SOS Villages Greece  
Stichting Bootvluchteling  
Still I Rise  
Terre des Hommes Hellas  
Terre des Hommes International Federation  
Velos Youth  
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen  
Women's Refugee Commission

## References

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- <sup>i</sup> [Al Jazeera](#), 9 September 2020  
<sup>ii</sup> [CNN](#), 9 September 2020  
<sup>iii</sup> [UNHCR](#) and [Council of Europe](#), 9 September 2020  
<sup>iv</sup> Together with relevant EU and UN agencies and in cooperation with civil society organisations.  
<sup>v</sup> [UNHCR](#), 31 August 2018  
<sup>vi</sup> [Amnesty International](#), 6 December 2018 ; see also: [Call to Action](#) by Civil society organisations, March 2020  
<sup>vii</sup> [MSF](#), 30 July 2020  
<sup>viii</sup> [HRW](#), 19 March 2016  
<sup>ix</sup> [Ekathimerini](#), 9 September 2020  
<sup>x</sup> [Dpa-international](#), 9 September 2020  
<sup>xi</sup> [NLTimes.NL](#), 11 September 2020  
<sup>xii</sup> [France 24](#), 10 September 2020  
<sup>xiii</sup> [European Commission](#), 15 April 2020 ; [PubAffairsBruxelles](#), 8 July 2020  
<sup>xiv</sup> [MSF](#), 11 March 2020