



**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, 21/04/2020  
ARES(2020)2030884

Dear Commissioner,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 9 March 2020 in relation to the preparation of the new Pact on Asylum and Migration.

The Commission's aim is to give the EU the fresh start on migration that it needs. To this end, the Union needs to find new forms of solidarity and of sharing responsibilities to ensure the very varied and different realities of Member States are all taken into account. This will not be an easy task, particularly since the realities of migration are constantly evolving, not the least during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The new Pact will ensure that the EU acts responsibly and assists those fleeing war and persecution via a fair and efficient asylum system based on humanitarian principles and our common values. All measures proposed will respect fundamental rights and include the necessary guarantees for vulnerable groups, including children. While the EU must by law protect its external borders, I want to assure you that border procedures and any forms of detention in conjunction with such procedures, where required and duly justified, will be framed by the necessary fundamental rights safeguards.

Saving lives at sea is a moral duty and a legal obligation. In the context of the Pact, I will ensure a more structured cooperation among Member States when it comes to search and rescue. The Pact will also encompass a comprehensive migration management system that applies a 'whole-of-route' approach. In this context, robust partnerships with third countries are an essential element. The EU will therefore continue to support third countries to manage migration in full respect of human rights.

*Ms Dunja Mijatović*  
*Commissioner of Human Rights*  
*Council of Europe*  
*F – 67075 Strasbourg Cedex*

*E-mail: [commissioner@coe.int](mailto:commissioner@coe.int); [Isil.GACHET@coe.int](mailto:Isil.GACHET@coe.int)*

As regards Non-Governmental Organisations, I strongly condemn any kind of violence perpetrated against their activities. These organisations ensure the delivery of services to migrants and provide a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable people on the move.

Developments linked to the COVID-19 pandemic will require additional targeted efforts to prevent outbreaks and protect the most vulnerable, in particular in the congested reception centres on the Greek islands. The Commission is in close contact with the Greek authorities to determine the needs and find ways forward, including through immediately available additional financial assistance of EUR 350 million focusing on expanding reception capacity. The Commission will of course continue to monitor the implementation of financial assistance and ensure the transparency and accountability of all spending. Moreover, I am coordinating, together with the Greek government, the relocation of up to 1,600 unaccompanied minors to other Member States. I am pleased that the first relocations have already taken place, despite the challenging circumstances.

I look forward to our continued dialogue and count on your active engagement and contribution to the debate on the EU's new migration and asylum policies.

Yours sincerely,



Ylva JOHANSSON