



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

The Director-General

Brussels
HOME.C.4/AS

Dear Minister, dear Notis,

I would like to thank you very much for both your letters of 1 and 2 June 2020. I am pleased to see that your personal efforts and those of the Greek authorities to improve migration management are bringing results. I see that good progress is being made in several areas we have been discussing over the past months. Your efforts are important not just for Greece, but for the whole of the EU.

The signing of the contracts for interpretation and transportation a few days ago is excellent news, as both of these long-awaited contracts are key for an efficient reception process. We equally welcome the publication of the Ministerial Decision and the call for proposals for the accommodation component of the ESTIA II programme. This is a very positive and important step for the continuation of this flagship project. I appreciate the efforts made to improve the cost efficiency of the project and avoid abuses and we will review together the new approach at the end of this month.

I would also like to commend the very good work the Greek authorities are doing to prevent and address the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the overcrowded Reception and Identification Centres. The fight against the pandemic is a slow and difficult process that requires concerted efforts at many levels, and this is why the Commission has done everything it can to support the Member States in this challenge.

My colleagues are working on the assessment of your applications for Emergency Assistance for construction works in two mainland sites and for the new Reception and Identification Centres on Samos, Kos and Leros. The centres will be an important step forward, in particular in terms of reception conditions and security. I would specifically thank you for the very prompt response to our request for assurances regarding the operation of the centres, which will allow a swift assessment by the Evaluation Committee. We look forward to receiving the draft Ministerial Decision you mention in your letter in due course, as well as further news regarding the new centres in Lesbos and Chios.

Regarding our shared concern about security and safety in the camps, especially after the violent events of the past few weeks, I am glad that measures are being taken to reinforce the deployment of police forces inside and in close proximity to the camps, and improve the authorities' responsiveness in terms of evacuation and contingency plans. I strongly

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believe that such measures are needed to avoid further incidents and tensions on the islands.

Moreover, I wish to commend the Greek authorities for the significant increase in the number of adopted asylum decisions over the past few months. In this context, it would be helpful if the Greek Asylum Service could continue to share detailed statistics on a weekly basis with the Commission.

The implementation of the exits of recognised refugees from the reception system is a development that will allow the improvement of reception conditions for many asylum seekers currently outside the system. To this end, it is important to put in place necessary measures for access to integration and welfare services and continue the work on a comprehensive integration strategy that will offer opportunities to refugees in addition to the ongoing Helios project. I have been in contact with my colleague in charge of the European Social Fund with a view to exploring how we can jointly support the integration of this group into the Greek society.

In closing, dear Minister, I would like to once again commend all efforts that the Greek asylum and migration authorities are making under your lead. These efforts have resulted in much needed progress on a number of very challenging issues and I am confident that in this way, your ministry will continue delivering good results. The Commission stands by the Greek authorities' side and will continue supporting your efforts to manage migration effectively and in line with EU law.

Yours sincerely,

Monique PARIAT