



President of the European Commission
Ursula von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

6th of December 2019

Subject: for a fair and just new Pact on Migration and Asylum

**CC: Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas;
Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson**

Dear President of the European Commission,

We, the partners of the *Faces of Migration* project, welcome the spirit of ambition and determination that will guide the newly elected European Commission to address the challenges of our times and adapt to the ongoing transformations that our world is subject to. As you have already highlighted, *“what we do now will determine what kind of world our children live in and will define Europe’s place in the world”*. In such a fluid environment, it is a critical moment for all of us to maintain the values upon which the Europe is built. **Human rights have always been a cornerstone of the European way of life**, the integrity of which will be in the center of the European Commission’s priorities. To this end, we would like to stress the importance to ensure that no one will be left behind and that human dignity will be the major priority during the next years of changes and continuous shifts.

With great distress, we all become witnesses of **women, children and men who continue to die in the Mediterranean Sea**. At the same time, others are suffering passing through the Sahara Desert and escaping from conflict areas in the Middle East and Africa. In Europe, migrants and refugees are severely exploited alongside the poor European population, in agriculture fields and in many industries. **Inequalities** both inside and outside countries are widening, cause involuntary migrations and undermine sustainability. In the current political context, the EU should defend its democratic fundamental values and ensure that the new policies will not violate the European *acquis* and that they will all aim at a sustainable future. **The new Pact on Migration and Asylum** is a major opportunity for the European Commission to establish its migration policies by using a human rights-based approach while acting in the SDGs framework.

As partners of the *Faces of Migration* program, we call for a truly comprehensive Pact:

- a sustainable plan for the protection of the rights of refugees and migrants taking into consideration people's needs and vulnerabilities, especially for women and children;
- a fair responsibility sharing mechanism between the EU member states to ensure that each country will be able to offer to the migrants and the refugees it hosts a dignified way of living;
- the establishment of more regular channels to Europe via resettlement, relocation, labour visas etc.
- a systemic action comprising the implementation of a big search and rescue operation, following the standards that Italy adopted in *Mare Nostrum*, a swiftly relocation between member states, and the adoption of a common European external and security plan to contribute to solve the conflict in Libya;
- the improvement of the external dimension of the EU's migration policy to support human mobility for sustainable development, using funds to third countries (e.g. the Official Development Assistance) for fulfilling the purposes they have been established for, without diversions to other aims.

We are strongly committed every day in our countries to raise awareness and make Europe a welcoming place for everyone and we will continue supporting you in building a fair and just Europe that will be a leader in human rights protection worldwide.

Yours sincerely,



Veronika Nožinová,
International Coordinator for DEAR project

on behalf of:

Diaconia ECCB – Center of Relief and Development;
Bulgarian Platform for International Development (BPID);
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP);
Federazione degli Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV);
ActionAid Hellas;
Povod institute for culture and the development of international relations in culture