



Migration: Commission takes action to find solutions for unaccompanied migrant children on Greek islands

Brussels, 6 March 2020

Following President **von der Leyen's** visit to Greece on Tuesday, together with the Presidents of the other EU institutions, the Commission presented its [Action Plan for immediate measures to support Greece](#), which was welcomed by the Ministers at the extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council.

The Commission is working on all fronts to deliver support to Greece and the people concerned and is in constant contact with the Greek government, including at the highest level. In the context of these ongoing support efforts, President **Ursula von der Leyen** spoke to the Greek Prime Minister **Kyriakos Mitsotakis** on the situation of unaccompanied migrant children on the Greek islands. Together they agreed to put in place a process to ensure the protection and care of some of Europe's most vulnerable people, unaccompanied migrant children.

The President entrusted Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva **Johansson** to take this process forward. Therefore Commissioner **Johansson** will travel to Greece next week to meet the relevant Greek Ministers and stakeholders. The aim of the visit is to work on identifying solutions for unaccompanied migrant children, in particular on the Greek islands.

President **von der Leyen** said: *"Thousands of unaccompanied children reach Europe every year. Their protection is a priority for the Commission. This is why I have asked Commissioner Johansson to travel to Greece to find solutions to ensure their protection. Commissioner Johansson and I will now work closely with the Member States to find a safe place for these children."*

Greek **Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis** said: *"For many months the Greek government has been raising the flag on the tragedy of unaccompanied children arriving in Greece. I am very pleased that the new commission president has thrown her personal support in addressing this issue. What we need is a clear demonstration of European solidarity, which should take the form of a voluntary relocation pact, by which unaccompanied minors who are currently in Greece are relocated to other European countries. The scars of the soul are not easy to heal. Let us all do what is right to help Greece address this most sensitive issue."*

Efforts will focus on the one hand on solidarity efforts by other Member States, through voluntary relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece to other Member States, and on the other hand on sustainable solutions for those unaccompanied migrant children that will stay in Greece. The Commission stands ready to provide increased financial and operational support for Greece and Member States in this respect. A conference will also be held with Member States for children in migration in spring, focusing on relocation efforts.

Background

There are currently over 42,000 people on the Greek islands, among these approximately 1,500 unaccompanied minors.*

The Commission has continuously supported Greece in dealing with challenges related to migration management. This includes financial support of over €2.23 billion and the presence of staff from European agencies and from the Commission who support Greece in border management, asylum and return procedures, technical implementation issues and operational planning and coordination.

This week, the Commission announced additional financial support for Greece of up to €700 million to support border and migration management and enhanced operational support from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Asylum Support Office, as well as the launch of the Civil Protection Mechanism.

For More Information

[Press release](#): Extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council: Commission presents Action Plan for immediate measures to support Greece, 4 March 2020.

*Updated on 16 March 2020 at 18:35. The original figure of 5,000 referred to the total number of

unaccompanied minors in Greece, on the islands and the mainland.

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