



HOUSE OF LORDS
European Union Committee

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Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President
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13 April 2016

Dimitris Avramopoulos
Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship
European Commission
Berlaymont
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Mr Timmermans and Mr Avramopoulos,

The Commission's Response to the House of Lords' European Union Committee Report on the 'EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling'

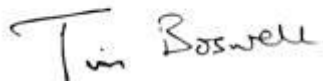
Thank you for your letter of 7 March 2016 concerning the House of Lords report on *The EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling*, which the EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee considered at its meeting on 13 April 2016.

We are pleased to note that you share our views in a number of areas. We would like to clarify, however, that our report did not recommend that "those currently entering the EU as irregular migrants should be referred to as refugees." Rather we said that the available evidence suggests that the majority of migrants arriving throughout the summer of 2015 were at least *prima facie* refugees, as defined by the UNHCR. We therefore recommended that this should be acknowledged and that the term 'refugee crisis' should be adopted to refer to the present crisis. Indeed, we note the Commission has already used this term in a number of documents.

We support the Commission's proposals for Member States to create safe and legal routes for persons in need of international protection into the EU. In our report, we encouraged the Commission to do more, for example by making use of humanitarian visas. We welcome that the Commission has proposed a voluntary scheme for humanitarian admission from Turkey, and would be grateful for further information on whether the Commission intends to propose further schemes in the future.

We look forward to considering the outcome of your evaluation of the Facilitators' Package. We note that interested parties are pressing for the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation to be adopted as soon as possible. We therefore consider it all the more necessary to evaluate the EU Returns Directive as soon as possible after the commencement of the Regulation in order to incorporate any necessary safeguards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Boswell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chairman of the European Union Committee