



El president
de la Generalitat de Catalunya

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

Dear Commissioner,

I would like to express my deep consternation at the serious humanitarian crisis that the European Union is facing in the Mediterranean area. This situation absolutely calls for a resolute, comprehensive and long-term EU response to the challenges of migration. Like most European countries, and especially those bordering the Mediterranean, for centuries Catalonia has been a land of accommodation for people coming from different cultures and countries. Our integration policies range from ensuring fair access to healthcare, education and other basic social services. We also have an international protection plan in place.

I am writing to inform you that our government and institutions are working to accommodate around 4500 refugees, and right now we are ready to receive up to 1800 refugees in all of Catalonia, 600 of which would be hosted directly by the Catalan Government. Our government is coordinating an action plan to facilitate the accommodation of this amount of refugees and we are already prepared. Moreover, Catalonia's local governments and civil society are also leading several initiatives to facilitate the migrants' integration into our villages.

The people of Catalonia have also been refugees themselves and as one of the best-known of them, Pau Casals, once said, that makes us a people "against war and the inhumanity of wars". In addition, generations of people in Catalonia have experiences of refugees in their families; our history is filled with examples of that, and simply we cannot keep looking at this tragedy without acting. We pursue an active dialogue with other territories to exchange best practices experiences in order to ensure a better accommodation policy.

The EU project is aimed to better the lives of our citizens and it is based on the respect for the values of solidarity, diversity and democracy. Providing a solution for those millions of people running away from war is not only an international legal duty; it is also a moral obligation for all of us.

Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency, Mr. Raül Romeva, is the member of our government in charge of this issue. He is at your disposition to advance on this initiative.

While looking forward to further progress in this situation, I take this opportunity to express the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó

Barcelona, 15 March 2016