

Ms. Ylva Johansson
EU Commissioner for Home Affairs
Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
Rue du Luxembourg 46
B-1000 Brussels

Dear Commissioner,

Since our appointment as ministers of the Government of Catalonia, our duty has been to tirelessly advance and coordinate the foreign relations and migration policies of the Catalan government in front of the EU institutions, its Member States and other European and global actors. This role has convinced us of the importance of a continued dialogue between multilevel administrations to ensure agreements taken at the European level are coherent and efficient, especially in priority issues for Catalonia such as peace, democracy and human rights.

Last week's fire at Moria refugee camp in the Greek island of Lesbos, one of the continent's biggest refugee camps, is a tragic example of how too many times the rights of refugees and migrants have not been sufficiently safeguarded in Europe despite constant warnings of international human rights bodies and organizations. The fire at Moria engulfed the vast majority of the camp, leaving almost 13.000 refugees without shelter and publicly exposing Europe's negligence towards the dire situation in which refugees too often find themselves.

In front of this humanitarian disaster, prompt and unified action from all European actors becomes more crucial than ever. In this sense, the Catalan Ministry for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency, together with the Catalan Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Families, have already reached an agreement to take in at least 120 refugees located in the Greek islands and particularly in Lesbos, including unaccompanied children and minors.

Our government is thus willing to be an active part of the crisis solution, showing our commitment with a solidarity-based response as demonstrated by previous actions such as the recent declaration of Catalonia as a safe harbor for rescue boats. To this effect, we called the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry to comply with the rulings of several courts which give the Catalan government full competences to welcome refugees, together with the necessary resources and infrastructure to integrate them as fully fledged citizens into our society.

Also the EU should play a bigger role in the protection of human rights, and once and for all abandon its passive attitude in front of such humanitarian tragedies within its borders. We therefore call both the Commission and its Member States to take in a further number of refugees in order to fully comply with the EU obligations and commitments of 2015 in which Member States decided to accept 160.000 refugees – a decision which never materialized.

Moreover, we directly ask the Commission and its Directorate-General of Migration and Home Affairs to lead and coordinate an urgent, solidary and unified humanitarian response of all EU Member States to put an end to potential similar situations in the future by implementing a common European asylum policy that incorporates a permanent search and rescue operation in the Mediterranean and that complies with international agreements on human and children's rights and the right to asylum for all refugees fleeing war and violence.

In this democratic mission, subnational actors and stateless nations should not hide behind traditional nation states, but take instead a step forward and start working hand in hand with other national, European and global institutions, organizations and entities. You can count on Catalonia for this – our nation will always be at the side of those fighting for their right to a dignified life.

Yours sincerely,



Bernat Solé i Barril
*Minister for Foreign Action, Institutional
Relations and Transparency*



Chakir El Homrani Lesfar
*Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and
Families*

Barcelona, 22nd of September of 2020