



HRC 35th session

Oral Statement by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)
On the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants on his mission
to Greece

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) welcomes the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur, François Crépeau, on the human rights of migrants on his mission to Greece. The GNCHR expresses its sincere appreciation for the consultation held between the UN Special Rapporteur and the GNCHR during the former's follow-up visit in Greece. The GNCHR is particularly thankful to the UN Special Rapporteur for his explicit support, and particularly the recommendation to the Greek State regarding the GNCHR's reinforcement with competent staff and resources that will allow her to effectively carry out her mandate in the field of migration.

Following the meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur, the GNCHR, within the framework of its competence, conducted a series of visits to six accommodation sites in Greece, namely Elliniko, Elaionas, Schisto, Skaramagkas and Kos Island. The GNCHR shares the UN Special Rapporteur's concerns and concurs that there is a *de facto* violation of the rights of migrants and refugees, regarding their massive and indiscriminate detention on the islands of the eastern Aegean, their timely and effective access to international protection, decent accommodation, health and education services. The GNCHR fully concurs with the UN Special Rapporteur's policy recommendations, particularly the taking into account by the international community of the onus lying upon Greece due to the economic stringency and the legal and geopolitical fact that Greece is the custodian of an external European Union border.

In consort with the European Union institutions, Greece should indeed be able to develop "durable human rights-based solutions for migrants and asylum seekers in Greece, including on the important issue of border management, and adopt strategic long-term migration and mobility policies in accordance with international human rights law." Special attention should always be given to the effective protection of children, and particularly unaccompanied children, older persons, persons with disabilities, victims of trafficking, sexual violence and other vulnerable groups. With regard to child protection, it is crucial for all actors involved, the Greek State, the EU member states and the EU most notably, to foster inclusivity and ensure the smooth societal and education integration of refugee and migrant children.

It is now more important than ever to join our forces and unite our voices with the UN Special Rapporteur and call for the immediate modification of the EU migration policy and particularly of the Dublin system, which has proven inconsistent with the needs of reality and incompatible with the principles of respect for human rights, solidarity and fair burden-sharing among EU Member States. In particular, the GNCHR calls upon the EU, not to pass the legal and moral responsibility of the refugee and migration crisis on to Greece alone. The relocation of refugees and asylum seekers from Greece to other EU Member States must be immediately and effectively reactivated, in a spirit of solidarity and a context of a more equitable numerical distribution among the EU Member States, as dictated by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU Treaties.

The GNCHR commends the UN Special Rapporteur and urges the Human Rights Council to accept his proposals and act upon them.