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MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
HOME AFFAIRS

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Dear Ministers, 

I hope that this letter finds you both well. Considering the challenges Greece is facing due to the combination of the migratory pressure and the COVID-19 pandemic, I am writing to follow up on a number of issues that have been the topic of regular contacts in the last weeks between our services. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr Koumoutsakos for his reply of 14 April to my letter regarding the conference for the unaccompanied minors and the ongoing relocation exercise.

I would like to commend all the efforts of the Greek authorities to relocate the first unaccompanied minors under these extraordinary circumstances. It is important to continue these efforts and our good cooperation for the remaining more than 1,500 relocations based on a standardised approach, as only this will allow carrying out such a high number of relocations within the following months. The Commission will of course continue to coordinate and support the exercise operationally and financially and we will remain in regular contact with Member States to explore interest for further pledges.

*Mr Notis Mitarachi*  
*Minister of Migration and Asylum*

*Mr George Koumoutsakos*  
*Alternate Minister of Migration and Asylum*

Moreover, I appreciate your actions to contain the spread of COVID-19 among the migrant population. I would like to stress again the imperious need to take all necessary steps to decongest overcrowded facilities with no further delay based on the identified people at high risk and new accommodation places to prevent a virus outbreak. To this end, I would encourage you to ensure the coordination of all actors involved in this exercise. We stand ready to support the implementation of the emergency measures and we are already assessing requests in this respect.

Furthermore, I would be thankful for any update about the facilities in Serres and Malakasa. While the Commission cannot fund any completed works and activities in these facilities under Emergency Assistance, we stand ready to support from the date that the International Organization for Migration would take over the provision of the site management support.

I welcome the public consultation on further amendments to the migration legislation. We have made suggestions to bring this legislation fully in line with the relevant EU directives. With regard to asylum registrations, the Commission has just issued guidance on the implementation of the asylum rules during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I trust the Greek Asylum Service will take the necessary measures to continue the registration and processing of asylum applications during this period.

Last but not least, I would be grateful if you could provide my services with an update on the two long awaited contracts for transportation and interpretation. Moreover, the implementation of ESTIA urgently needs to be accelerated with the publication of the Call, as well as the finalisation of the relevant legal framework.

In closing, I would like to enquire whether you have considered the establishment of a strategic and coordination department within your Ministry to ensure the smooth management of migration and proper financial coordination of the different projects.

While our services continue the close contacts, I am looking forward to your feedback on these matters that would enable us to support you in the best way possible.

Yours sincerely,

