

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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STATEMENT

**The GNCHR expresses its deep concerns about the situation in the Reception Centers
of the Eastern Aegean islands and, especially, of Moria in Lesvos
(15.10.2018)**

Constant reports are being published lately in the international press about the situation in the Reception and Identification Center (RIC) for Applicants for international protection at Moria, Lesvos. The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR), the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), has constantly shared the deep concerns expressed by NGOs which are active in this field, while it has also received complaints with regard to the potential commission of criminal offences or acts which clearly violate the human right to health, the human right to safety and, eventually, the human right to life of everyone involved in the procedure of granting international protection both in Lesvos and in other Reception Centers in the region of the Eastern Aegean islands. The GNCHR, performing its institutional role and represented by its Board, met with the Minister of Migration Policy, Mr. D. Vitsas, on October 1, 2018, in order to exchange views on the issue of refugees and the infrastructure for the reception and management of refugee and migration flows in the Country and especially on the situation in the Reception and Identification Center of Moria in Lesvos. The Director of the Asylum Service, Mr. M. Karavias, also attended the meeting, which was preceded by another meeting on this topic with the representative of the Greek Police Authorities on September 24, 2018, as well as with a high-level delegation of the Organisation of Doctors without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

Being completely aware of the actual situation in the field, as well as of the factual and legal difficulties of dealing with the constantly increasing number of applicants for international protection who arrive at the Aegean islands and, particularly, in Lesvos and Samos, the GNCHR notes the following:

- The GNCHR reiterates its firm and consistently expressed position about the **immediate termination of the entrapment of the applicants for international protection in the Eastern Aegean islands and the lifting of geographical limitations** imposed on them. It is urgent to **immediately transfer all vulnerable people off the islands to safe and appropriate accommodation on the mainland and to ensure the smooth operation of effective control of**

the conditions for granting international protection in the respective infrastructure in order to avoid a recurrence of the same situation in the future.

- The GNCHR states that it will continue **to assist the overall effort for the management of refugee and migration flows in the Country** and stresses once again that the overall reception and protection management system, which consists in the First Reception Services as well as in an administration-wise autonomous and independent Asylum Service, should function in an entirely sufficient and financially transparent way, ensuring full, effective and safe services for the applicants for international protection, provided by employees with full occupational, financial and personal safety.
- The GNCHR calls once again upon the **Greek and European Authorities to immediately reexamine the overall policy for the reception of applicants for international protection in Greece and in the European Union (EU)**, including the EU-Turkey Joint Agreement, and to adopt a new, comprehensive system of rules for all Member States, based on the principle of solidarity and proportionality, in full respect of the rules of refugee law and of international law for the protection of human rights in general. The rule of law and the protection of human dignity constitute the core of the common values that underpin the EU; their effective protection fortifies democracy and the safety of all of us, especially in today's difficult times.
- The GNCHR is ready to use the full armory of the European and international legal order, in cooperation with its respective Institutions in Europe and around the world, in order **to ensure the imminent and effective respect of the rights of those applying for international protection in the region and, eventually, to protect the human dignity** of those involved in this procedure, including the state authorities.

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) is the independent advisory body to the Greek State on matters pertaining to human rights protection. It was established by Law 2667/1998 in accordance with the UN Paris Principles. Thirty-two institutions whose activities cover the field of human rights are currently represented in the GNCHR (independent authorities, departments of university-level educational institutions, workers' and disabled persons' confederations, NGOs, political parties and ministries).