

**27<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (8-26 SEPTEMBER 2014)**

**Greek National Commission for Human Rights**

**Oral Statement on the Report of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**

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The Greek National Commission for Human Rights warmly thanks the Working Group for visiting Greece and meeting its representatives. We fully agree that progress has been made, but much remains to be done, mainly in practice.

We share the Working Group's concern for the length of detention of migrants, the failure to apply alternatives and the detention of minors, bad detention conditions and the heavy backlog of asylum cases – problems to which we have repeatedly drawn the authorities' attention. We agree with the positive evaluation of several legislative measures, including those regarding asylum procedures. However, there are currently problems with the staffing of the appeals committees, which hamper their operation and independence and which the Government should be asked to remedy.

We are very glad that the Working Group recalls that 90% of undocumented migrants enter the EU via Greece, which for most is not their final destination, while the Dublin system criteria that overburden the Greek asylum system, in particular in times of financial crisis, are maintained by Regulation (EU) 604/2013.

Besides, we note that budget cuts have dangerously affected the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill.

We agree with the Conclusions and Recommendations. We particularly thank the Working Group for recommending the reinforcement of our Commission through the provision of competent staff and resources.

However, support for the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill should also be recommended, while, regarding migrants, recommendations should also be addressed to the EU. The Special Rapporteur on human rights of migrants stressed the need for more solidarity and responsibility-sharing among EU Member States and for the revision of the Dublin system. Indeed, in view of the growing migration flow, it is not merely by providing financial assistance to Greece that the EU will fulfil its primary duty to protect human rights. The EU asylum system must be re-designed and focus on human dignity and rights – not merely on ways to stockpile human beings in some Member States.