



Rädda Barnen



Svenska Röda Korset Svenska kyrkan

Stockholm, 21 April 2020

To Minister of Justice and Migration Morgan Johanson,

This week, two European Union (EU) member states started to relocate to their territories dozens of unaccompanied migrant children from the Greek Aegean Islands. Several other member states have pledged in the past few weeks to contribute to what is an important effort of solidarity with Greece and respect for the rights of children in distress.

We call on your government to demonstrate its leadership and commit to welcome to your territory unaccompanied children from Greece in the weeks to come, or as soon as possible given the difficult context created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sweden's government has repeatedly stated its intention to embrace humane migration policies; joining the initiative to relocate unaccompanied migrant children from Greece would put Sweden once again at the forefront of this laudable effort.

We welcome the initiative announced and supported by EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson and a group of EU member states on March 12 to swiftly relocate at least 1,600 unaccompanied migrant children from the Greek Islands. This initiative is important both immediately, in order to protect them in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in the longer term, to ensure that they are not left out without a future in the difficult conditions in which they would be stuck in the Islands' camps.

As you know, there are around 1,600 unaccompanied migrant children in the Aegean Island camps. Children are among the most vulnerable groups trapped in the overcrowded and substandard facilities, and the extremely limited access to running water, toilets and showers, is putting them at significantly heightened risk of infection. Children in the Island facilities are deprived of access to their most basic rights, [including the right to education](#) and to health. Many [face insecure conditions](#) sleeping rough, sometimes in the open, in other formal and informal parts of the island camps.

In October 2019, Greece's Citizen Protection Minister called other European Union governments to share responsibility by voluntarily relocating unaccompanied children from Greece. On March 4, dozens of European non-governmental organizations [called on](#)

[governments of all EU member states](#) to commit to the emergency relocation of unaccompanied children from the Greek Islands. On April 6, they [reiterated this call](#), considering the risks related to the looming COVID-19 pandemic in the Islands' facilities.

By responding positively to this appeal and joining the initiative pursued by EU's Home Affairs Commissioner and a group of EU member states, your government could ensure that a little bit of solidarity could greatly change the lives of these children, and offer them the care and protection any child deserves to have. It would also demonstrate your government's commitment to an EU response based on shared responsibility and shared humanity.

We look forward to your hopefully positive response and remain available to discuss this urgent matter with you.



Anna Lindenfors, Director, Amnesty International, Swedish section



Oliver Schulz, Secretary General, Médecins Sans Frontières Sweden



Måns Molander, Nordic Director, Human Rights Watch



Helena Thybell, Secretary General, Save the Children Sweden



Martin Ärnlov, Secretary General, Swedish Red Cross



Helén Ottosson Lovén, Secretary General, Church of Sweden