

16th of December 2020

Dear Vice-President Schinas,

Dear Commissioner Johansson,

Last September we reported to you about the dramatic situation of migrants and refugees and the local population on the island of Lesbos after the fire in the Moria camp. In the letter we sent you, we already warned you about the inhuman conditions in the new Kara Tepe camp: no access to water or electricity, no proper sanitation, no medication or the possibility of implementing Covid19 prevention measures. We also denounced the unacceptable treatment of people who were covid-positive, locked behind a fence but without adequate hygiene measures. Two months ago we said that the site did not have the environmental and geographical conditions to give shelter to these people: that it was exposed to wind, humidity and cold. At that time, the justification of the European Union and the Greek government was that the urgent and sudden nature of the accident had forced the establishment of the new camp in record time, even though we had already warned that this justification was not valid. It was only a matter of time before such a tragedy occurred.

It is in this context that we again denounce with great sorrow the situation in which the Kara Tepe camp finds itself. After the fire, the Commission rushed to say that there would be no more Morias. But the truth is that the conditions in which they find themselves are even worse despite the colossal amounts of money supposedly spent on works for this “temporary” camp. Hence, more than 8,000 people living in tents in Kara Tepe are exposed to inhuman conditions and, on top of it all, this week they have been flooded. Some tents have been blown away by the wind and hundreds of them have been bathed in mud, as reported by several people on the ground, journalists and NGOs, including the Basque NGO Zaporeak.

Many times we have warned about the impossibility of the field being able to withstand the adverse weather conditions of the terrain in which it is located. This is not the first time it has been flooded and it will not be the last. We are approaching winter and the situation is becoming increasingly critical.

The European Union cannot continue to look the other way. It has to comply with international and European law and guarantee the right to asylum and the dignity of all those on our territory. In light of all this, the undersigned MEPs, we call again on the European Commission to proceed to the immediate evacuation, redistribution and relocation of all persons seeking protection from Lesbos and all the Aegean Islands and to ensure the actual implementation of our existing EU asylum acquis and that the right to international protection is effectively guaranteed across EU Member States.

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