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I am writing you to express my deep concern about the situation of refugees in Greece. Thousands of refugees, including families with small children, people with disabilities and pregnant women, are trapped in dire conditions in Greece, due to discriminatory border closures. Many are sleeping rough, without access to protection. As thousands are arriving, the humanitarian situation will deteriorate unless European Union (EU) states urgently start accepting refugees from Greece.

Lack of solidarity among EU Member States is condemning refugees to immense and unnecessary suffering. This situation is unacceptable. Europe can and must do more.

As the President of the European Council, I urge you to act on the humanitarian crisis in Greece and to push Heads of State and governments in the Council to:

- Use all available means to urgently accept asylum-seekers from Greece including by relocating a significantly larger number of persons without applying restrictive selection criteria, easing family reunification and allowing asylum-seekers to obtain visas from member states' representations in Greece for onward legal travel;
- Support an effective relief programme to ease the pressure on Greece to respond to the humanitarian crisis;
- End discriminatory border practices and support countries along the Western Balkans route to ensure refugees and asylum seekers can access asylum procedures and adequate reception conditions;
- Open up more safe and legal routes for people in need of international protection to ensure refugees do not need to embark on dangerous sea crossings to reach protection in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

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