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The President of the European Council  
Mr. Donald Tusk  
General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union  
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175  
1048 Brussels  
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Brussels, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Dear President Tusk,

For already too many months, Europe's solidarity has been tested by how we react to the challenge represented by the mass arrival of asylum seekers. On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March, the Heads of States or Governments of the European Council met together with the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr Ahmet Davutoglu.

We would like to affirm, ahead of the European Council on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of March, that the European Youth Forum, representing 100 youth organisations and millions of young people, is deeply concerned with the proposals that were made on 7<sup>th</sup> March under a deal between the European Union and Turkey.

We refuse to see our representatives make human beings the subjects of political bargaining. "Exchanging" one Syrian with another is not only extremely dehumanising but also does not offer a sustainable solution to the current humanitarian crisis.

We refuse to see our representatives use negotiations on the accession of Turkey to the European Union in these talks. The management of migration and asylum and the future of Turkey in Europe must remain issues that are separated from each other, based on separate assessments, rooted in finding long term solutions.

We refuse to see our representatives delay their actions and try to outsource challenges. Such bargaining shows an obvious lack of solidarity and political will within our Union. At the same time, many more drown in the Mediterranean or live in appalling conditions for far too long as in the refugee camps of Calais, France and Idomeni, Greece.

We need solutions to this humanitarian crisis that give hope and respect human rights of migrants rather than political deals that only postpone the inevitable need for a common European policy on asylum and immigration grounded on international agreements and the European Union treaties.



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According to several reports, the majority of the people seeking protection on our soil are young people, just like us. We therefore call on our representatives to act collectively and urgently to protect the most vulnerable right now, in respect of their rights.

In a letter sent to you on 18<sup>th</sup> February that we signed, we said that we want European solutions to the crisis of leadership on the issue of migration. The deal that has been discussed with Turkey is nothing like a European solution we called for.

We call on the European Council to take urgent and immediate action, including the development of common policy on asylum and immigration<sup>1</sup>. Member states must also urgently accelerate the implementation of the relocation and resettlement schemes. As of today, only 660 people have been relocated and 3,407 people resettled<sup>2</sup>. It is far from the 160,000 people planned and even further from the around 3 million refugees currently hosted by Turkey.

Furthermore, it is essential that the European Union and its member states stand by Greece and any other Member State that is a point of entry for refugees in Europe. Allowing countries to unilaterally build walls and close borders one after another cannot be a long term and sustainable measure.

The respect of our European values must have a pivotal role and any decision must fully respect European and international laws, such as the Universal Convention on Human Rights, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as European legislation<sup>3</sup>, and guarantee the dignity and the human rights of those seeking protection in Europe.

Our cooperation with Turkey should take into account the needs of the displaced populations, especially young refugees. We encourage the European Union and Turkey to further implement their Joint-Action Plan adopted in October 2015 and especially Turkey's commitment "*to adopt policies, legislation and programme facilitating for Syrians under temporary protection to have access for the duration of their stay in Turkey to public services including education for pupils, to health services and participation in the economy*" and to "*ensure that vulnerable people continue to be identified and taken care of*".

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<sup>1</sup> Respectively article 78 and 79 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

<sup>2</sup> According to the European Commission

<sup>3</sup> Especially the content of Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawal international protection



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Moreover, the financial support provided by the European Union to Turkey should be incremental and conditional on the fact that safe conditions are ensured for refugees on its soil.

However, for such policy to not become hypocrisy, the European Union and its Member States must make the same commitments when it welcomes refugees within its own borders.

We are calling upon collective European responsibility that recognises the plight of people and that safeguard their human rights before anything else.

We sincerely hope that European Council, under your leadership, shows us hope for a Europe that is based on rights for all, Europe that plays a global role in protecting human rights and solving humanitarian crises with dignity.

Yours sincerely,

Johanna Nyman