



## **CEMR calls for solidarity and respect for human rights and dignity after the fire which destroyed the Moria Centre in Lesbos**

*Resolution adopted by CEMR following the 29 September 2020 meeting of the Policy Committee*

In the light of the recent devastating fire in the Moria Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) on the island of Lesbos, we, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, recall our commitment to human dignity, affirm the need to protect vulnerable communities and call for more solidarity among European Union Member States. 12,000 asylum seekers and refugees, who already lived in unacceptable conditions and in many cases with lack of access to sanitation or hygiene facilities, primary healthcare and basic services, have been left without shelter.

Cities and regions have been on the frontline by providing immediate emergency assistance to those in need, as well as exchanging on good long-term integration practices. From small villages to larger cities, as well as provinces, counties and regions, many have shown support. Concerned by the impossibility of leaving the island of Lesbos and the Greek authorities' having to handle this dramatic situation alone, several European cities and regional governments have already offered to welcome asylum seekers and refugees from Moria and called on national governments to do whatever it takes to provide the necessary and urgent assistance needed, while respecting national competences on migration policies.

Solidarity, together with respect for fundamental rights and human dignity, are now more than ever imperative to protect people living in Europe regardless of their origin and status. Nevertheless, the quality of life and security of all EU citizens should never be compromised, taking into account the financial burdens and integration challenges for Member States and local authorities hosting disproportionate numbers of refugees and asylum seekers which may lead to conflict and tension. Accordingly, and in line with the CEMR resolution and call for a Real Common European Asylum Policy<sup>1</sup>, as well as our views on the future of EU funds in the area of migration and the work of the Partnership on the Inclusion of Refugees and Migrants of the Urban Agenda for the EU, we call on the European Union and Member States to:

Immediately transfer those asylum seekers with high chances of getting their applications successfully processed and give priority to vulnerable groups, such as children and their family, unaccompanied minors, women, elderly persons and people with disabilities;

Provide assistance and transfer people who lost their shelter to a safe destination;

---

<sup>1</sup> CEMR Policy Committee, "Resolution for a Common European Asylum Policy at All Levels of Governments", Paris, 7 December 2015:

[https://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR\\_resolution\\_refugees\\_final\\_EN-0.pdf](https://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_resolution_refugees_final_EN-0.pdf)

CEMR Policy Committee, "Call for a Real Common European Asylum Policy", Nicosia, 20 April 2016:

[https://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR\\_Call\\_for\\_a\\_real\\_common\\_european\\_asylum\\_policy\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_Call_for_a_real_common_european_asylum_policy_EN.pdf)



Ensure adequate and dignified accommodation for all, while guaranteeing access to basic services such as health care, food and sanitary and hygiene facilities;

Provide those who have been tested positive for COVID-19 with safe housing for the quarantine period, medical care and hospitalisation, as necessary;

Share the responsibility for the reception and relocation of the asylum seekers and refugees in Europe;

Take into account our willingness as local and regional governments to reinforce partnership in order to build more inclusive societies, moving from an emergency-oriented approach to a more sustainable approach which focuses on integration;

Help local governments to have better access to funding, more knowledge exchange and capacities, as well as improved regulations at all levels adapted to the needs on the ground;

Give specific support to local governments acting as first-entry points to ensure that they are equipped to provide basic services, as well as to avoid conflicts with host communities;

Create an emergency mechanism to handle and distribute financial support in immediate and flexible ways, especially to countries regions and local authorities that observe a sudden influx of refugees and migrants. The mechanism should facilitate the assessment of pending asylum requests in each member state and help them to process applications under a fast-track procedure, always respecting fundamental and human rights, as well as European commitments and international law.

The European Union is at a critical turning point, just after presenting a 'fresh start' on migration and integration in the form of a new Pact on Migration and Asylum and before a new Action Plan on Integration of Third-country Nationals. Local and regional governments need further support in the framework of these new initiatives in order to be able to provide an effective and integrated approach to build more inclusive societies. It is a great opportunity to focus more on the needs on the ground and place local and regional governments at the centre.