

To

Bosnia And Herzegovina

Prime Minister, Fadil Novalić

Chair of Council of Ministers, Zoran Tegeltija

Bosnia's Security Minister, Selmo Cikotic

European Commission, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson

EEAS, High Representative for Foreign Affairs - Security Policy, Josep Borrell

We are extremely concerned about the current situation of 900 refugee migrants in what is left of Lipa camp. We have learned the attempt to transfer them to a temporary reception facility failed. Even though we measure the reaction of your population that has shown solidarity with migrants for years the humanitarian situation requires an urgent response, keeping people in a real winter prison is contrary to international law. The already dramatic situation has worsened following the fire at the camp, leaving people without a roof, without heating, without running water, at the mercy of the weather and food parcels.

We call on the authorities :

- to take immediate action and urgent humanitarian measures to protect migrants from the cold and provide them with dignified living conditions
- to facilitate access to an effective asylum procedure
- to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations whose working conditions are currently unsustainable

The severe human rights violations committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina are intolerable and people can't be left facing harsh living conditions, especially in times of Covid-19.

However, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot compensate for the lack of a solidarity based migration policy at EU's borders. That is why we also call on the responsibility of the European authorities, the European Commission, the EEAS and the Council, to adopt a coordinated policy response at the borders of the European Union so that migrants have access to safe and legal routes to the EU, in accordance with international law and that EU member states organise the relocation of migrants in solidarity.

This relocation must be organised as a matter of urgency with regard to people coming from the Lipa camp and structurally in the future. We call on the Commission to work with the BiH authorities to ensure, for as long as this temporary solution is there, that the place is safe for all and that it has adequate infrastructure with access to running water, food and health provisions and dedicated services for vulnerable people as well as access to education and legal aid.

The Commission must also ensure NGOs are supported in carrying out their vital work on the ground. We urge the Commission to bring truth to its promise "Leave No One Behind" and bring immediate

change for the better to the lives of migrant people. We also urge you to support the BiH authorities in strengthening the asylum system and the reception conditions.

Finally, European citizens must be informed of what is happening at the EU's borders. Freedom of expression and press remain essential and the work of human rights activists, journalists and NGOs is essential and must be guaranteed. Reported threats by some political actors to journalists reporting on migration situation must stop.

Yours sincerely,