

## OPEN LETTER

### Addressed to:

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**Mrs. Mariya Gabriel**  
**European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth**  
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**Mrs. Ylva Johansson**  
**European Commissioner for Home Affairs**  
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**Mr. Janez Lenarčič**  
**Commissioner for Crisis Management**  
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### **Subject: A call by concerned researchers for immediate action and radical revision of current EU policies on mobility and migration governance**

We, the undersigned researchers, working on projects funded by the European Commission (Horizon 2020, ERC, MSC, etc.) to improve migration governance, border crossing, and the treatment of refugees in the European Union, want to express our paramount concern regarding the violent course of action that is taken by the EU and individual member states in these testing times.

In recent years, numerous EU-funded research projects have meticulously studied diverse aspects of human mobility into and inside the EU. Paying special attention to pressing issues like border crossing and asylum procedures, academics have been critically examining: asylum bureaucracies, deportation and detention regimes, commercial interests from security and military sectors in the management of entry and border control, protection practices and the criminalization of solidarity, rescue missions at sea, implications of the EU-Turkey deal, externalization of borders, hotspots, so-called ‘hot returns’ and pushback operations, family reunification, mobility infrastructures, xenophobic tendencies and the rise of populist politics, and much more.

Current EU policies, in combination with increased measures towards the ‘securitization of migration’ taken by member states, go on exposing the displaced border crossers to grave dangers. The recent situation in the EU-Turkish land and sea borders is testimony of the negative effects that these policies have had both on asylum seekers and the local societies. The militarization of the refugee issue, the marketization of border control technology, and the

ill-treatment of asylum seekers have all led to the normalization of violence and in certain instances to the suspension of the right to asylum. Under these conditions, the safety of people in camps is neglected, the humanitarian regime is under attack, and an enormous protection gap is emerging. In the context of the recent COVID-19 epidemic in the EU, we are on the brink of a humanitarian disaster that may unnecessarily cost many lives.

As experts, who have been given the task to study these complex realities, we find the course taken by the EU doubly disturbing. First, it is evident that much expert knowledge, which we have been working hard to produce, and which is funded by taxpayers in the EU, is being outright disregarded by decisionmakers. Second, on the ground, politicians and policymakers push for policies that fail to meet minimal human rights standards or live up to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The line of action adopted by the EU has directly resulted in an extremely dangerous situation for some of the most vulnerable people in and around the EU. It is also perilously playing into the hands of existing anti-immigration and xenophobic tendencies, which are promoted by populist and extreme right-wing groups.

We believe that the difficult times we confront call on us to exercise much prudence and wisdom in drafting adequate policies that can meet effectively and humanely the enormous challenges we face. For as researchers, it seems contradictory, to fund with public money big research projects that aim to improve migration governance and enhance the protection of refugees, and then completely disregard their findings and knowledge building about humane, forward-looking, and sustainable options, when drafting crucial new policies.

In a constructive spirit, we call upon the EC to put into use the expert knowledge that it has been investing in for years. We therefore urge a radical revision of current EU policies, and we offer our time and expertise to help preparing new guidelines, together with EC officials, on the following crucial issues:

- In the most urgent sense, confronting the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, we call on the EC and member states to treat migrants and refugees in camps across Europe in a similar way to that of EU citizens and evacuate the overcrowded hotspots in the Aegean;
- A move away from a strategy of containment and deterrence and towards the application of pan-state solidarity in accordance with a rights-based approach to global migration governance, fundamentally based in an attempt to alleviate the disproportionate burden on Greece, Italy, Spain, and particularly the island societies in the Southern borders of the EU;
- A move towards acting in accordance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the principles of the New York Declaration. Accordingly, the EC should demand that individual member states apply adequate reception actions, restore asylum procedures, restrain from the production of an official discourse that encourages xenophobia, and strongly denounce all acts that threaten both asylum seekers and humanitarian workers;
- An immediate decision to create an evidence-based policymaking structure that obliges EU officials to take into account the research findings of academics, who are studying human mobility and the best ways to deal with the challenges we face in this field.

## **Signatories (partial list, updated by March 26, 2020)**

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Evelyn Ruppert, Professor, Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London [ERC CoG ARITHMUS: Peopling Europe - How data make a people]

Polly Pallister-Wilkins, Associate Professor, Department of Politics, University of Amsterdam [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Anna Triandafyllidou, Professor, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration, Ryerson University, Toronto [H2020 scientific coordinator of GREASE and BRaVE]

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Michelle Pace, Professor in Global Studies, Roskilde University, Denmark and Honorary Professor, University of Birmingham, UK. [H2020 SIRIUS: Skills and integration of migrants, refugees and asylum applicants in European labour markets]

Bridget Anderson, Professor, University of Bristol [H2020 ETHOS and FP7 BEU-CITIZEN]

Claudia Aradau, Professor of International Politics, King's College London [ERC SECURIT FLOWS Enacting border security in the digital age: Political worlds of data forms, flows and frictions]

Umut Korkut, Department of Political Science, Glasgow Caledonian University [Respond: Multilevel Governance of Migration in Europe and Beyond]

Anja van Heelsom, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

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Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Aalborg [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Maggi Leung, Associate Professor, Utrecht University [H2020 Welcoming Spaces in Europe: in Europe: revitalizing shrinking areas by hosting non-EU migrants]

Peter P. Mollinga, Professor of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London [H2020 AGRUMIG: Migration governance and agricultural & rural change in 'home' communities]

Julien Jeandesboz, Professor, Department of Political Science and REPI, Université Libre de Bruxelles [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Charlotte Heath-Kelly, Associate Professor, University of Warwick [ERC Starting Grant: NeoliberalTerror: The Radicalisation of Social Policy in Europe]

Birgit Glorius, Professor, Department of European Studies and History, Chemnitz University of Technology, Chemnitz [H2020 CEASEVAL Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development]

Rinus Penninx, Professor Emeritus, University of Amsterdam [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Albert Ali Salah, Professor, Utrecht University [H2020 HumMingBird: Enhanced migration measures from a multidimensional perspective]

Önver A. Cetrez, Associate Professor, Uppsala University [H2020 RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond]

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Evelyn Ersanilli, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam [ERC RIGHTS: The bargaining power of sending countries in influencing the rights of their low skilled migrant workers]

Panos Hatziprokopiou, Assistant Professor, School of Spatial Planning and Development, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki [H2020 TRAFIG: Transnational Figurations of Displacement]

Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas, Senior Research Fellow, CIDOB – Barcelona Centre for International Affairs [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Elsbeth Guild, Professor, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London [H2020 PROTECT: The Right to International Protection. A Pendulum between Globalization and Nativization?]

Willem Schinkel, Professor of Social Theory, Erasmus University Rotterdam [ERC Monitoring Modernity: a comparative analysis of practices of social imagination in the monitoring of global flows of goods, capital and persons]

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Nishat Awan, Researcher, Goldsmiths, University of London [H2020 Topological Atlas: Mapping contemporary borderscapes]

Paolo Cuttitta, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow, Université Sorbonne Paris Nord [LIBORG: EU Externalization of Migration and Border Management to Libya: the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Human Rights Implications]

Monika Szulecka, Researcher, Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw [H2020 RESPOND: Multilevel Government Migration of mass migration in Europe and Beyond]

Mehdi Lahlou, Professor researcher at University Mohamed V, Rabat [EU-funded Global Research GREASE: Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing together European and Asian Perspectives]

Annalisa Pelizza, Professor in Science and Technology Studies, University of Bologna [Processing Citizenship: Digital registration of migrants as co-production of citizens, territory and Europe]

Sabine Hess, Professor, Institute of Cultural Anthropology, University of Göttingen [H2020 Respond: Multilevel Governance of Migration in Europe and Beyond]

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Yuri Kazepov, Professor of Urban Sociology, University of Vienna [H2020 COHSMO: Inequality, urbanization and Territorial Cohesion: Developing the European Social Model of economic growth and democratic capacity]

Tina Magazzini, Research Associate, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute [EU-funded Global Research GREASE: Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing together European and Asian Perspectives]

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Bernd Kasperek, Researcher, Göttingen University [H2020 RESPOND: Multi-level governance of mass migration to Europe and Beyond]

Eniko Vincze, Professor, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj- Napoca, Romania [Horizon 2020 RELOCAL: Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development]

Emanuela Roman, Forum of International and European Research on Immigration [H2020 TRAFIG: Transnational Figurations of Displacement & H2020 CEASEVAL: Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development]

Katerina Rozakou, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences [ERC DEPORT REGIME: The Social Life of State Deportation Regimes]

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Maria Kousis, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Crete [H2020 TransSOL: European Paths to Transnational Solidarity in times of crisis]

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Sarah Bracke, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Amsterdam [Dutch Research Council, Vici grant: EnGendering Europe's Muslim Question]

Johannes Claes, Research Fellow, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Lina Vosyliute, Research Fellow at Justice and Home Affairs Unit, Center for European Policy Studies [H2020 ReSOMA; H2020 ASILE]

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Bianca Szytniewski, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University [H2020 Welcoming Spaces in Europe: in Europe: revitalising shrinking areas by hosting non-EU migrants]

Lena Karamanidou, Research Fellow, Glasgow Caledonian University [H2020 RESPOND Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond]

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Julija Sardelić, Researcher [MSCA IF InviCitRom: The Invisible Edges of Citizenship: Readdressing the Position of Romani Minorities in Europe]

Marina de Regt, Assistant Professor, Dept of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Marie Gobel, Postdoc-researcher, Utrecht University [H2020 NoVaMigra: Norms and Values in the European Migration and Refugee Crisis]

Emily Yates-Doerr, University of Amsterdam [ERC project: Global Future Health: A Multisited Ethnography of an Adaptive Intervention]

Shivani Kaul, PhD, University of Amsterdam [ERC project: Global Future Health: A Multisited Ethnography of an Adaptive Intervention]

Kimberly Sigmund, PhD, University of Amsterdam [ERC project: Global Future Health: A Multisited Ethnography of an Adaptive Intervention]

Andie Thompson, PhD, University of Amsterdam [ERC project: Global Future Health: A Multisited Ethnography of an Adaptive Intervention]

Isabelle Anguelovski, Research Professor, Director, Barcelona Lab for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Franziskus von Lucke, Research Associate, Institute of Political Science, University of Tübingen [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]

Ben Tonra, Full Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin, [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]

Alexa Zellentin, Lecturer/Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin, [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]



Graham Finlay, Assistant Professor, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin [H2020 GLOBUS; FP7 FRAME; FP7 bEUcitizen]

Pundy Pillay, Professor of Economics and Public Finance, School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Researcher, [H2020 GLOBUS, “Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice”]

Thomas Diez, Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Institute of Political Science, University of Tübingen [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]

Sonia Lucarelli, Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Bologna [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]

Michela Ceccorulli, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences University of Bologna [H2020 GLOBUS, Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice]

Nora Stel, Assistant Professor in Conflict Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen  
Veronika Nagy, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University

Eva Midden, Assistant Professor Gender Studies, Utrecht University

Domitilla Olivieri, Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University

Corina Tulbure, PhD Researcher, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Bábes-Bolyai University

Eda Kiriscioglu, PhD Researcher, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam & Koc University, [H2020 ADMIGOV: Advancing Alternative Migration Governance]

Funda Ustek-Spilda, Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London [ARITHMUS: How data make a people (ERC 2014-2019)]

Melis Mevsimler, PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, Netherlands [ERC Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging]

Pafsanias Karathanasis, Post Doctoral researcher, University of the Aegean

Christian Lahusen, Professor, Department of Social Sciences, University of Siegen  
Femke van Noorloos, Assistant Professor International Development Studies, Dept. Human Geography & Planning, Utrecht University

Francesca Rosignoli, Postdoctoral researcher, Environmental Research in the Human Sciences area, Stockholm University

Marion Borderon, Assistant professor in Geography, University of Vienna [H2020 AGRUMIG: Migration governance and agricultural & rural change in ‘home’ communities]

Silja Klepp, Professor, Department of Geography, CAU / Kiel University

Jovana Mastilovic, Adjunct Member of Law Futures Centre, Griffith Law School

Martin Lundsteen, Assistant Professor, Pompeu Fabra University

Elisabeth Miltz, postdoctoral researcher, Institute of Geography, University of Bern

Ioulia Mermigka, Post-doctoral Researcher, University of Thessaly [Greece and the European Social Fund: Border regimes: Political and cultural dimensions of the refugee crisis in the case of Chios 2015-16]

Yannis Pechtelidis, Associate Professor in Sociology, University of Thessaly [Greece and the European Social Fund: Border regimes: Political and cultural dimensions of the refugee crisis in the case of Chios 2015-16]

Nikos Souzas, Post-doctoral Researcher, University of Thessaly [Greece and the European Social Fund: Border regimes: Political and cultural dimensions of the refugee crisis in the case of Chios 2015-16]

Karin Schwiter, Research Group Leader in Economic Geography, University of Zurich [DFG: DECENT CARE WORK. Transnational Home Care Arrangements]

Jennifer Steiner, Department of Geography, University of Zurich

Eva Papatzani, Researcher, National Technical University of Athens [H2020 TRAFIG: Transnational Figurations of Displacement and RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Migration in Europe and Beyond]

Charalampos Tsavdaroglou, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow, University of Amsterdam [RE-HOUSING: The Refugees' Right To Housing: State Policies and Housing Commons in Istanbul, Athens and Belgrade]

Elif Durmuş, PhD Candidate, Utrecht University [NWO Research Project "Cities of Refuge]

Nikos Nagopoulos, Professor of Sociology, University of the Aegean [EU Programme for Employment and social Innovation - Equal / European Social Fund]

Laurie Kain Hart, Professor of Anthropology and Global Studies, UCLA

José Muller – Dugic, PhD student, Department of Geography, Planning & Environment Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University

Ine Lietaert, Professor, Ghent University & United Nations University

Nadina Leivaditi, Researcher, University of the Aegean [H2020 RESPOND:Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond]

Christoph Hedtke, University of Applied Sciences Erfurt

Annegret Haase, Department of Urban and Environmental Sociology, Leipzig

Giovanna Astolfo, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London

Katharina Kullmann, phd student, University of Applied Sciences Erfurt

Morgan Etzel, Doktorand, Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität München

Violeta Moreno-Lax, Reader in Law, Queen Mary Law School, London [FP6 REFGOV: Reflexive Governance in the EU; Jean Monnet Network: MAPS, Migration and Asylum Policy Systems in the EU]

Dimitris Parsanoglou, Senior Researcher, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens

Marianne Maeckelbergh, professor, Ghent University [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Carlos Delclós, postdoctoral researcher, Institute for Government and Public Policy, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Marta Ill Raga, researcher, [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Theodoros Karyotis, researcher, [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Aleksandra Hall, researcher, [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Seppe Malfait, researcher, [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Christina Sakali, researcher, [ERC project: Property and Democratic Citizenship]

Rosa Sanchez, Assistant Professor, European public policy, University of Amsterdam

Salim A. Nabi, York University, Toront

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