

**Question for written answer E-005517/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Prosecution of NGOs in Greece

Greek authorities are prosecuting 35 persons including foreign nationals working for NGOs, among them primarily European search and rescue organizations, for the facilitation of trafficking in human beings claiming they disguise their activities as humanitarian operations. Looking at Greek policies related to asylum, it is clear that the life-saving and watchdog activities of these NGOs oppose the political objectives of the Greek authorities. The criminalisation of NGOs or any other non-state actors that carry out search and rescue operations at sea, while complying with the relevant legal framework, amounts to a breach of international law, and therefore is not permitted by EU law, as reiterated by the European Commission in its recent guidance to the Facilitation Directive.

- 1 What will the European Commission do to ensure the implementation of its guidance, as those providing assistance by rescuing someone at sea are not to be incriminated in Greece?
- 2 How does the Commission plan to protect citizens of the European Union from unlawful prosecution by member states?
- 3 Which strategies does the Commission have to ensure that Greece respects the obligation to save lives at sea, as the active persecution of NGOs hinders the necessary humanitarian and advocacy activity, and lives are lost daily?