**Mr. Margaritis Schinas**

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life

**Ms. Ylva Johansson**

Commissioner for Home Affairs

Rue de la Loi 175

B-1048 Brussels

Brussels, 26 of April 2021

Dear Vice-President Schinas, Dear Commissioner Johansson,

It is with great dismay that we have learned of the latest shipwreck: a rubber boat with about 130 people on board sank northeast of Tripoli. We fear that in all likelihood all passengers died.

This fatal result was avoidable. All European and Libyan authorities were informed and for more than 48 hours nobody came to their rescue. The civilian telephone network Alarm Phone alerted them that a total of three boats were in distress in international waters off Libya. According to the report[[1]](#footnote-1) by Alarm phone, On 21 April, the Libyan Coast guard intervened to intercept a second boat that was just five nautical miles from the boat with the approximately 130 people but decided to leave the scene and abandon the boat at sea. The location of the third boat, with 40 people on board remains unknown. On the European side, the only action undertaken was the launch of a surveillance airplane by Frontex, identifying the boat and informing all authorities and merchant vessels in the area about the critical distress situation. Regrettably, Frontex failed to further support a search and rescue operation. This incident adds to existing evidence[[2]](#footnote-2) of the incompetence or unwillingness by the Libyan Coast guard of carrying out effective search and rescue operations. We believe this incident should be thoroughly investigated as to clarify responsibilities in the coordination failure that led to the tragic loss of 130 lives, including the time and date of Frontex’s intervention. We ask the Commission to lead in this regard and to thoroughly assess the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guards, its reliability and disposition to perform their duties in search and rescue operations. Moreover, we call the Commission to consider the serious and systematic violations of the human rights of the migrants that are brought back to Libya by the Coast Guard.

It is clear that in the absence of effective coordination by national authorities, conducting effective search and rescue operations and saving lives at sea it is nearly impossible. The result of this lack of effective coordination is that in the central Mediterranean, an estimated that 453 migrants died or missed while crossings the Mediterranean Sea since the start of 2021.

This is why we are writing you to bring again to your attention the situation in the Mediterranean Sea, which as you well know, will probably worsen during the summer and with good weather conditions.

As Members of the European Parliament, we have been repeatedly asking for a European mission and a European fund for Search and Rescue. We cannot ignore what is happening at sea or shift responsibility to the Libyan Coast Guard. Saving life at sea is an obligation under International Law and the EU and its Member States should uphold to this obligation and to its principles.

We look forward to hearing from you and remain at your disposal for any further exchange on the matter.

With our kind regards,

Pietro Bartolo - S&D -

Domènec Ruiz Devesa - S&D -

Brigit Sippel - S&D -

Tinke Strik - Greens / EFA

Cornelia Ernst - The Left -

Juan Fernando López Aguilar - S&D -

Javier Moreno - S&D -

Janina Ochojska - EPP -

Bernard Guetta - Renew-

Dietmar Köster - S&D -

Özlem Demirel - The Left -

Sandro Gozi - Renew -

Isabel Carvalhais - S&D -

Jan-Christoph Oetjen - Renew -

Saskia Bricmont - Greens / EFA -

Thijs Reuten - S&D -

Konstantinos Arvanitis - The Left -

Alice Kuhnke - Greens / EFA -

Bettina Vollath - S&D -

Idoia Villanueva Ruiz - The Left -

Cyrus Engerer - S&D -

Eleonora Evi Greens / EFA -

Margarida Marques - S&D -

Jordi Solé - Greens / EFA -

Mick Wallance - The Left -

Pierfrancesco Majorino - S&D -

Rosa D’Amato - Greens / EFA -

Clare Daly - The Left -

César Luena - S&D -

Salima Yenbou - Greens / EFA -

Pernando Barrena - The Left -

Massimiliano Smeriglio - S&D -

Niklas Nienaß - Greens / EFA -

Marisa Matias - The Left -

Aurore Lalucq - S&D -

Diana Riba - Greens / EFA -

Maria Eugenia Rodríguez Palop - The Left -

Pierre Larrouturou - S&D -

Terry Reintke - Greens / EFA -

José Gusmao - The Left -

Raphaël Glucksmann - S&D -

Erik Marquardt - Greens / EFA -

Sira Rego - The Left -

Tiemo Wölken - S&D -

Caroline Roose - Greens / EFA -

Manu Pineda - The Left -

Ibán García del Blanco - S&D -

Katrin Langensiepen - Greens / EFA -

Giuliano Pisapia - S&D -

Damien Carême - Greens / EFA -

Nikolaj Villumsen - The Left -

Mounir Satouri - Greens / EFA -

Ville Niinistö - Greens / EFA -

1. 1. https://alarmphone.org/en/2021/04/22/coordinating-a-maritime-disaster-up-to-130-people-drown-off-libya/?post\_type\_release\_type=post [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/16/wiretaps-migrant-boats-italy-libya-coastguard-mediterranean [↑](#footnote-ref-2)