

Appeal from European doctors: bring refugees on the Greek islands to safety.

As doctors in Europe, we call on the leaders of our governments and of the European Union to take immediate action to ensure the safety of refugees.

In recent years, the refugee camps on the Greek Islands have become increasingly overcrowded. The corona pandemic that threatens to overwhelm the camps will have catastrophic consequences for the refugees, the Greek inhabitants and the rest of our European society.

It is an illusion to think that a COVID-19 outbreak in these camps could be kept under control. 40,000 people are living on a few square kilometres, and there are only a handful of doctors present. Many children and adults are already ravaged by physical and mental traumas.

If Europe looks away now, this situation could escalate to become a medical disaster, which would represent a serious violation of the norms and values of European healthcare.

It is our duty to prevent this from happening, for the refugees, for the Greek people who have been in limbo for years, and for Europe as a whole.

As doctors, we have sworn an oath promising to provide medical care to all people, irrespective of their personal background. As European doctors, we are obliged to do everything possible to prevent this looming medical catastrophe.

The leaders of the European Union also made a promise four years ago that each country would take in a fixed number of refugees from Greece and Turkey. Not a single EU country has complied with this agreement. Moving refugees to camps on the Greek mainland is not an effective solution; the camps on the Greek mainland are already overcrowded.

We call on all leaders of the EU to comply with the agreement from 2016, and to take refugees into their countries, in order to prevent a medical disaster on European territory.

This Dutch initiative was initially started on March 24th, 2020, and in the short time since launching, has already been signed by thousands of European medical doctors. To sign the letter, please go to <https://en.sosmoria.eu>

The letter has been signed by a number of prominent Dutch including, amongst others:

Doctor Louise Gunning-Schepers – Professor at the University of Amsterdam and founder of The European Public Health Association (EUPHA)

Gerlach Cerfontaine – Chairperson of the Association of Dutch Medical Professionals (www.vvaa.nl)

Doctor Maria van den Muijsenbergh – Professor at Radboud University Medical Centre

Doctor Ivan Wolffers - Emeritus Professor at Amsterdam University Medical Centre