

**Question for written answer E-003341/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Sophia in 't Veld (Renew), **Tineke Strik** (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Journalist arrested in Hydra

On 13 June 2021, Dutch journalist Ingeborg Beugel was arrested and later released for facilitating the irregular residence of a refugee in accordance with Article 29 Paragraph 6 of Greek Law 4251/2014.

Prosecuting this as a facilitation of irregular residence contradicts Article 1b of Directive 2002/90/EC, which states that the facilitation of irregular residence requires financial gain in order to impose sanctions.

However, Ingeborg Beugel did not make any profit and the refugee had taken all steps to regularise his residence. In fact, his appeal against his rejected asylum application had been indefinitely postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He had tried in vain since October 2020 to submit a new request to the Greek Asylum Service, but the service was unavailable due to the pandemic.

1. Will the Commission assess the compatibility of the Greek law against facilitating irregular residence with EU law?
2. Is it aware of the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of Greek public offices, where delays are negatively affecting asylum seekers' applications?
3. Is it committed to protecting journalists from political interference and strategic lawsuits against public participation, and will it verify that the arrest of Ms Beugel was not indirectly aimed at discouraging her from reporting cases of public mismanagement?