Question for written answer E-004183/2021
to the Commission

Rule 138

Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left), Dimitrios Papadimoulis (The Left), Stelios Kouloglou (The Left), Elena Kountoura (The Left), Cornelia Ernst (The Left), Dietmar Köster (S&D), Domènech Ruiz Devesa (S&D), Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE), Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE), Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE), Clare Daly (The Left), Fernando Barrena Arza (The Left), José Gusmão (The Left), Anne-Sophie Pelletier (The Left), Leila Chaibi (The Left), Marisa Matias (The Left), Sira Rego (The Left), Malcolm T. Kirk (The Left), Eugenia Rodriguez Palop (The Left), Milan Brglez (S&D), Damien Carême (Verts/ALE), Salima Yenbou (Verts/ALE)

Subject: New bill on deportations and return procedures in Greece

On 3 September 2021, a reform bill on the deportations and return procedures of third-country nationals was adopted by the Greek Parliament, passed exclusively by a majority of the ruling party.

During the drafting stage, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, expressed serious reservations about the bill, and effectively called for its withdrawal as it ‘is not aligned with human rights standards’ and ‘would seriously hinder the life-saving work carried out by NGOs and their human rights monitoring capacities in the Aegean’.

1. Does the Commission consider this legislation, and in particular Article 40 which introduces restrictions that essentially prohibit and penalise any NGO action to carry out or aid sea rescue operations, compatible with the Greek Government’s obligation to comply with human rights and the relevant Commission guidelines?¹

2. Does the Commission condone the tendentious method by which Article 40 was introduced after the end of the public consultation period?

3. Does the Commission find that, by curtailing all relevant NGO activities, the Greek Government is inhibiting the right to asylum, the safeguarding of the legal process for all return procedures, the prevention of refoulement and the prevention of automatic, large-scale illegal detentions?

¹ Commission Guidance of 23 September 2020 on the implementation of EU rules on definition and prevention of the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence (C(2020)6470).