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Migrant and Refugee Crisis Management Proposal

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Table of Contents

1. Local Level	3
<i>1.1 Present situation</i>	3
<i>1.2 Proposed Measures</i>	4
<i>1.3 Advantages</i>	4
2. National Level	5
<i>2.1 Present situation</i>	5
<i>2.2 Proposed Measures</i>	5
<i>2.3 Advantages</i>	6
3. European Level	6
<i>3.1 Present Situation</i>	6
<i>3.2 Proposed Measures</i>	6
<i>3.3 Advantages</i>	7

Migrant and Refugee Crisis Management Proposal

At the moment, Lesbos island is receiving daily 2.000 migrants and refugees. This number puts Lesbos amongst the first ranking positions of the areas that receive the current refugee influx. It is obvious that a small island of 85.000 inhabitants is not able to carry the burden of managing such a humanitarian crisis. Especially when a Common European Migration Policy is formed and implemented at a very slow pace, there is no high strategy of crisis management and scarcity of means and resources.

In order to manage an inherently complex issue with huge humanitarian extentions, international cooperation and synergy at all levels of administration is needed in order to find immediately applicable and effective solutions. Given that Lesbos island is on the front line and is one of the main entry points of migrational influx to Europe, we have formed a project proposal. A proposal that aims at effective, efficient and in human terms management of migrational influx, with an ultimate objective of becoming a crisis management model for other cities.

The action strands of this project proposal are structured in three different levels: local, National and European.

Proposal

1. Local Level

The first level of management is local. In this level all levels of local administration, local authorities as well as volunteers are included.

1.1 Present situation

After their arrival at various spots along the Northen and Eastern coast of the island, all newly arrived migrants and refugees are headed on foot towards the city of Mytilene and the outskirts where the two reception centers are based. This march sometimes lasts for eighty exhausting kilometers and it is extremely dangerous because it takes place on main roads and during the night.

The registration takes place inside the premises of the reception centers and lasts for several days due to the lack of personnel and equipment. After the completion of the registration process, all registered migrants and refugees are headed to the port of Mytilene where they stand in very large queues in order to issue a ticket and embark on the ferry to Pireaus.

1.2 Proposed Measures

Objective : Even distribution of arrivals and faster completion

Means :

- Creation of Regional Registration Centers near the arrival points of migrants and refugees, along the Northern and Eastern coast of Lesbos
- First aid treatment, registration and ticket supply inside the Registration center, in order to depart immediately to the next destination
- Distribution of the newly arrived at the Registration Centers based on the distance of the arrival point from the center and the capacity at that given time
- Transportation by bus to and from the Registration center towards the two available ports of Sigri and Mytilene, after the completion of the aforementioned process. Whoever wishes to travel by plane or if there is provision for charter flights, will be transported to the International Airport of Mytilene.

The residence time must be limited in order to preserve high levels of flow to and from the Centers and to avoid the negative effects of overcrowding, which are very dangerous for the local population and the migrants and refugees themselves. Management and logistics of each Registration Center will be made by NGOs under the supervision of UNHCR in cooperation with Lesbos Municipality, local authorities and volunteers.

1.3 Advantages

- immediate first aid treatment to newly arrived migrants and refugees
- avoid the long march from the arrival spots to the city of Mytilene
- avoid overcrowding the Registration Centers
- Organised transport, registration and departure of all migrants and refugees
- Avoid the disruption of the local population and securing a normal everyday life of the local society

2. National Level

2.1 Present situation

The scarcity of local administration's resources require the assistance of the central government to implement this project proposal. Today's rate of refugees registration does not allow a high rate of arrivals and as a result we experience severe overcrowding phenomena. All of the above, in combination with the restricted means of transport (ferries, airplanes) as well as the large number of everyday arrivals, hinder the flow of refugee population to mainland Greece.

In terms of central government actions the following measures should be taken.

2.2 Proposed Measures

Objectives: Enhancement and high rate of registration process

Means:

- Secure the reenforcement of local public services such as the Police and the Coast guard that are responsible for the registration of refugees. Reenforcement not only in terms of stuff but in terms of machinery & equipment needed for registration
- We are proposing the amendment of the registration process. This modification will allow the participation of other civil service's personnel, after a short term training, at the registration process. Untill today, solely responsible for the registration process is the Police force and the Coast Guard.

Objective: Immediate departure to mainland Greece

Means:

- Use of the two available ports of Sigri and Mytilene with daily trips from each one of them
- additionally, one ship out of the flotilla responsible for migrant transport, must be based at the port of Mytilene and depart as soon as the required number of passengers is filled
- The aforementioned ships could be used as floating registration centers. Given that the trip to Pireus lasts from 11 to 14 hours and the registration process has a lot of different stages, we could install registration offices manned with police personnel and equipment. With this measure, we avoid the congestion of Police Departements in Athens.
- Charter flights must be commissioned to every destination that serves the needs of migrants and refugees

2.3 Advantages

- immediate departure of all registered migrants and refugees
- enhancement of the first registration process
- decongestion of the Registration Centers in Athens
- Constant and flow of the refugee population
- Security from possible terrorist elements that will try to enter Europe

3. European Level

The third and most important level refers to the European Union itself. Migration is an issue that concerns each and every member state. European Union plays a pivotal role in this and should not restrict itself in measures of reception, accommodation and international protection to those who really need it.

3.1 Present Situation

The current objective of the Common European Migration Policy consists only of measures regarding the reception, accommodation and international protection. On the contrary there are no measures against the root of the problem, meaning the illegal smuggling networks.

Furthermore, the equal distribution of the management cost and the migrant population is problematic because the number of refugees accepted by each member state is very small compared to the number of refugees entering Europe. Meanwhile countries like Spain, Italy and especially Greece bear the greatest management burden.

Smugglers gain a large amount of profit that can reach up to 2.000 € per person by organising the transportation of refugees and migrants. The crossing to Europe is done in very dangerous conditions and as a consequence many refugees and especially small children die.

All these lead to massive numbers of daily arrivals and as a result, we are having difficulties in planning our actions.

3.2 Proposed Measures

Objective : Secure entrance to the European Union

Means :

- International Organisations and International Community must intervene and stop the activities of the illegal smuggling network in order to stop the obscene exploitation of the people that flee from their countries in order to escape death and seek for a better life in Europe

- Implementation of countermeasures by special services. Fighting against every illegal smuggling network the majority of which are based in Turkey

Objective: Security of the E.U and selection of all those in need of international protection (screening process)

Means:

- Installation of one or more Registration stations in Turkey. Provision of first aid, registration and a safe departure issuing a normal price ticket and not an overpriced ticket from the smugglers.
- Selection of the convenient means of transport and direct departure to the final destination avoiding the exhausting marches through many European countries.
- Securing easier and more humane management of the large refugee population and proportionate distribution to every European member state.
- Lesvos Municipality and the Mayor Mr Galenos, have made investigative contacts with Turkish Mayors only to find out that they are very positive in cooperating and acting in common in order to manage the migration issue. They too are experiencing similar problems and wish for an international cooperation among city councils and Mayors.

3.3 Advantages

- Secure crossing to Europe and avoidance of the dangers of the current sea crossing
- Direct arrival to the final destination and avoidance of the long exhausting march
- Proportionate distribution of the refugees among European Member States
- Better, faster and more humane management of migrational influx
- Stopping illegal smuggling networks and trafficking
- European Security through the thorough registration and identification procedure. Second check and screening possibility at the final destination
- Effective and active human rights protection

This proposal is based on our experience in managing the migration issue. Lesvos Municipality is at the front line from the first days of the crisis. It includes practical proposals regarding the island of Lesvos and it expands to both National, European and International level. These proposals can serve as a crisis management model to other Eastern Aegean islands as well as other cities of the mediterranean that are dealing with a similar situation. We strongly believe that Local Administration can manage this critical situation with the all the necessary help from the

other levels of administration. That is because the Local Administration is the closest center of administration to the problem. At the same time, alongside the practical policies we submit, there is a need of political will in all the aforementioned levels.

We believe that an ongoing crime takes place in the Aegean. Thousand souls become victims of the smugglers that exploit them on their journey towards hope. During that journey, many of them, especially little children, loose their life trying to enter Europe. It is the European Union' s responsibility to put an end to this truly odious crime because otherwise both the International Community and the EU are as guilty as all the common smugglers.

Executive Report

- Local Level

Objective : Even distribution of arrivals and faster completion

Advantages

- immediate first aid treatment to newly arrived migrants and refugees
- avoid the long march from the arrival spots to the city of Mytilene
- avoid overcrowding the Registration Centers
- Organised transport, registration and departure of all migrants and refugees
- Avoid the disruption of the local population and securing a normal everyday life of the local society

- National Level

Objectives: Enhancement and high rate of registration process

Objective: Immediate departure to mainland Greece

Advantages

- immediate departure of all registered migrants and refugees
- enhancement of the first registration process
- decongestion of the Registration Centers in Athens
- Constant and flow of the refugee population
- Security from possible terrorist elements that will try to enter Europe

- European Level

Objective : Secure entrance to the European Union

Objective: Security of the E.U and screening all those in need of international protection

Advantages

- Secure crossing to Europe and avoidance of the dangers of the current sea crossing
- Direct arrival to the final destination and avoidance of the long exhausting march
- Proportionate distribution of the refugees among European Member States
- Better, faster and more humane management of migrational influx
- Stopping illegal smuggling networks and trafficking
- European Security through the thorough registration and identification procedure.

Second check and screening possibility at the final destination

- Effective and active human rights protection