

Open letter to the Federal Minister of the Interior, Building and Community

Federal Ministry of the Interior
Mr. Federal Minister of the Interior
Horst Seehofer
Alt - Moabit 140
10557 Berlin

Berlin, September 16, 2020

Open letter from the Integration Advisory Board Pankow on the refugees of Moria

Dear Federal Minister of the Interior,

With horror we take note of the events in Moria. For years, the EU refugee policy has been responsible for the precarious housing of thousands, including women and children, who have fled from war and violence. All appeals from civil society and politics to end these unworthy conditions were ignored. In Pankow alone there are currently around 3,000 refugees, twice as many as the federal government now - finally - wants to take in.

We expect from those responsible in the European Union and the Federal Government to finally ensure decent housing. Germany can, should and must help; In this situation, Germany can, should and must take more thousands of refugees. In this way the Federal Republic of Germany can set an example for other countries and we all no longer need to be ashamed. 174 cities and municipalities in Germany have declared themselves safe havens. Germany wants to alleviate people's suffering. We have got space.

First and foremost, we appeal to you and the Federal Government to work in this important role for the following measures and to take concrete steps yourself. **We also encourage local and city integration councils to join our call.**

Our demands:

1.

In order to provide short-term care for those desperate for protection (shelter, food, medical team, etc.), we demand the activation of European civil protection. Instead of arresting people seeking protection in the surroundings of Moria with police force in the open air, people must be rescued and cared for. Seeing the dramatic situation on Lesbos, Germany and the European states have to accept those seeking protection.

2.

Immediate start of the evacuation! In Moria and the other Greek camps, neither the asylum system nor access to reasonable medical care works, and the hygienic conditions are catastrophic. In Germany, the federal states of Berlin and Thuringia have planned a state admission program, and hundreds of other municipalities have volunteered to accept refugees from the camps. All of this is blocked with reference to a desired "pan-European solution", and the start of the country admission programs is even prohibited.

3.

Change the paradigm in refugee policy! A “weiter so” in European refugee policy cannot be an option after the fire in Moria. Looking the other way until the next disaster turns out to be catastrophic. The strategy of holding those seeking protections at the external borders of Europe and sending them back directly from there to authoritarian states like Turkey, even though these do not offer them any real protection, is a mistake. Please use the German Council Presidency to initiate the necessary change of paradigm in refugee policy! On September 23, the “New Pact on Migration” will be presented to the EU Commission, with immediate consequences for refugees on the Greek islands. Under the German Council Presidency, Europe needs a fundamental change of paradigm towards a policy based on human rights.

Sincerely yours,

The Integration Advisory Board Pankow.