



PRESS RELEASE

Let us help them!

### Greece joins a pan-European coalition that aims to reflower solidarity and respect towards refugees

Athens, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 – For the first time, a coalition of 130 civil society organisations have launched a European Citizen’s Initiative (ECI) for a shift in migration policy. The aim of the [We are a Welcoming Europe](#) campaign is to collect 1 million signatures in at least 7 Member States; compel Europe to consider our proposals; and adopt a more humane and realistic approach towards the major challenge of migration.

The campaign that is being launched today in Greece with the support of several civil society organisations, is based on two main principles: it seeks to put the European citizen at the heart of migration policy and to reinforce the rights of migrants and refugees. Through this initiative, European citizens are given the chance to have a more active role in shaping migration policy at the local and national level. The campaign has three specific requests:

- 1. Support the citizens and volunteers that want to help refugees;**
- 2. Put an end to the “crime of solidarity” which is in practice by several EU Member States, including Greece;**
- 3. Ensure respect for the fundamental rights of migrants and asylum seekers, by reinforcing the complaint mechanisms regarding labour exploitation and other abuses by European border guards.**

[Sign the petition now](#)

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, migration has become a major issue for our societies. It is becoming increasingly clear that an appropriate response can only come from a common European policy. However, Member States have not had a coordinated response on the issue of the reception of men, women and children who are fleeing all kinds of violence and look for safety in Europe.

On 15 December 2017, seven European citizens submitted to the European Commission the first European Citizen’s Initiative on migration. They represent the voices of all those who disagree with Europe’s migration policies and aim to initiate together a policy shift. Today, we, the citizens of Greece and Europe, are raising our voices so that we can welcome and advocate

for those who are in need, regardless of their legal status or nationality and without fear of being prosecuted.

**The first partner organisations in Greece:**

Actionaid

Advocates Abroad

Caritas Hellas

Greek Forum of Refugees

HIAS

Jesuit Refugee Service

Klimaka

SolidarityNow

Terre des hommes

