

Tirana, 08 September 2015

**Mr. Jean-Claude JUNKER**  
**President of the European Commission**

Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels, BELGIUM

Dear President of the EU Commission,

The emergent migration crisis in the larger Mediterranean area has by now confronted us with shocking images and testimonies of the plight of displaced people fleeing war zones, prosecution and poverty. Unfortunately these tumultuous times and the massive migratory flows targeting Europe have also been instrumentalized by transnational criminal networks of trafficking in human beings. We are now facing a tremendous challenge of ethical, political and economic dimensions requiring the concerted and sustained cooperation from actors at the local, regional, European and international levels – with a view to developing sustainable solutions vis-à-vis short-term and longer-term predicaments of this humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions.

The Presidency of the Association of the Mediterranean Ombudsman (AOM), supported by all the members of the AOM, strongly supports the commitment of EU institutions and agencies to mobilize the needed political will and resources to address the mixed migratory influxes. The effective implementation of the European Agenda on Migration endorsed by the EU Commission is of vital importance both in view of taking immediate actions to save the lives and safeguard the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as addressing root-causes of poverty and instability lurking behind the current crisis situation. With a view to the upcoming Extraordinary Council of Interior Ministers to be held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, we urge the EU Commission to continue its active role within the EU system and to leverage its influence in transit or origin countries in the Mediterranean area, so as to ensure the integration of a human rights approach in the national and cross-border response strategies and action plans addressing the migration crisis.

The European Union is currently facing a historical challenge requiring a principled and sustainable solution that is in keeping with the values of human rights and fundamental freedoms underlying its juridical order and informing its political culture. Undoubtedly, the degree of success achieved is inextricably bound to the level of genuine solidarity and shared responsibility that the European

Union and its Member States shall be able to nurture and uphold. Importantly, the success of policy agendas and concrete steps taken in view of the migration crisis is also contingent upon the support of a comprehensive and coherent partnership platform of coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders, including EU Institutions and Member States, international organizations, the civil society, local authorities and third countries. In this connection, the engagement of Ombudsman Institutions and National Human Rights Institutions is of vital importance for policy dialogue and practical measures that uphold the protection and promotion of human rights.

In view of the above and given AOM's strategic geographical outreach, including a significant number of originating and transit countries in the Middle East, the Western Balkans and the larger Mediterranean, the Presidency of the AOM hereby express the readiness of its extensive network of Ombudsman and National Human Rights Institutions to partner in joint deliberations and actions aimed at providing sustainable solutions to this humanitarian crisis.

Availing of this opportunity, Dear President of the European Commission, I would like to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Igli Totozani

AOM President

