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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>15 September 2020</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LP/086/20</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Rona McGhee</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712113</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Support for Aegean Refugees – Request by Councillor McCabe</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a request received from Councillor McCabe that consideration be given to the attached correspondence from the Scotland branch of Europe Must Act, a movement calling for the decongestion of refugee camps in the Greek Aegean Islands and a humane migration policy in Europe.
- 1.2 Councillor McCabe has requested that Members support in principle Europe Must Act's campaign to support Aegean refugees and that a report by Officers be submitted to the September 2020 meeting of the Inverclyde Council on this subject.
- 1.3 The movement launched a campaign in March calling on councils across Europe to make a pledge for the immediate resettlement of asylum seekers from the Aegean hotspot camps and is asking the Council to support the campaign by:
  - o writing to the Home Office, asking the UK government and UNHCR to support the decongestion of the Aegean Island camps and allow UK councils to take inhabitants of these camps as an immediate emergency measure under the new UK Resettlement Scheme; and
  - o pledging to relocate refugees from the Aegean Island camps.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the request from Councillor McCabe.

**Gerard Malone**  
**Head of Legal & Property Services**

## APPENDIX

**From:** Aberdeen Must Act [<mailto:aberdeenmustact@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** 17 August 2020 16:32

**To:** Cllr Stephen McCabe <[Stephen.McCabe@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.McCabe@inverclyde.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Support for Aegean Refugees

Dear Council Leader Stephen Mccabe

I'm Dale, a representative of the Scotland branch of 'Europe Must Act', a movement calling for the decongestion of refugee camps in the Greek Aegean Islands and a humane migration policy in Europe. In early March I returned from a volunteer teaching post in Vial refugee camp on Chios, Greece. I saw for myself the appallingly overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions where more than 30,000 men, women and children are trapped for months or years in camps designed for under 6,000 people)

Although this issue has disappeared from UK news since 2015, the situation for people living in the Greek island camps is now worse than ever. Basic human rights are being denied, including access to shelter, education and drinking water. People are trapped in the Aegean Islands as a result of an inhumane European migration policy.

In March Europe Must Act launched a campaign calling on councils across Europe to make a pledge for the immediate resettlement of asylum seekers from the Aegean hotspot camps. Cities across Europe have already pledged hundreds of places but much more needs to be done. Europe Must Act has 20 chapters across the UK including 7 in Scotland. We are working with Safe Passage and other charities to forward our aims.

Scotland is justifiably proud of it's record in resettling refugees of the Syrian conflict. However, as you will know, Refugee Resettlement is a reserved matter, so all decisions ultimately sit with the Home Office and the UNHCR. The UK arm of Europe Must Act is therefore preparing to lobby the UK parliament, Home Office and the UNHCR. John Finnie has already raised a [motion](#) on our behalf in the Scottish Parliament which currently has cross-party support from 34 MSPs. Nicola Sturgeon has also expressed support for our campaign and written to Priti Patel urging her: "to take a humane and welcoming approach to the resettlement of these refugees on the Aegean Islands"

The Group Leaders of Aberdeenshire council have written a joint [letter to COSLA](#) in support of the Europe Must Act campaign requesting a joint Scottish effort to relocate refugees from the Aegean. You can read a press article about council support [here](#)

We are now asking your council to support our campaign. We need you to:

- Write a letter addressed to the Home Office, asking the UK government and UNHCR to support the decongestion of the Aegean Island camps and allow UK councils to take inhabitants of these camps as an immediate emergency measure under the new UK Resettlement Scheme
- Pledge to relocate refugees from the Aegean Island camps

Scotland has a proud record of welcoming refugees. We need you to support a humane resettlement process in the UK in the name of justice and humanity. We recognise that Scottish local authorities face many challenges as a result of Covid-19, however, the situation facing the many thousands of extremely vulnerable people in refugee camps is infinitely worse.

Please join us to send the message to Westminster and Holyrood that Scotland welcomes refugees.

Your sincerely,

Dale Kitching

Europe Must Act - Scotland

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