



Brussels, 21 December 2017

RE: Future of the European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL) project

Dear President,
Dear Colleague,

We are writing to you to inform you about the future of the **European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL) project**, the main purpose of which, as you know, is to send volunteer European asylum lawyers to the hotspot of Lesvos to provide preliminary legal assistance to individuals seeking international protection.

Firstly, we would like to warmly thank you once again for your financial contribution to the project. This initiative would not have been possible without the generosity of your Bar/organisation.

Overview of activities: The ELIL project has now welcomed 103 volunteer asylum lawyers from 16 European countries and has provided legal assistance to over 2,390 cases (over 3,600 individuals). This legal assistance is principally focused on explaining the asylum process to applicants for international protection and preparing applicants for their asylum interview. The project's volunteer lawyers also assist applicants who have family in Europe to apply for family reunification under the Dublin Regulation.

New organisation: To ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, a new independent ELIL organisation has been established to manage and run the project. It has been established in Germany as a limited liability charitable company and is called the European Lawyers in Lesvos gGmbH. Its two shareholders are the CCBE and the DAV. It has a Supervisory Board made up of five individuals – two appointed by the CCBE (President Gemmell and former President Benichou), two appointed by the DAV (former President Professor Ewer and DAV Board Member Dr Mutschler-Siebert) and a Chair, Professor Vassilios Skouris, former President of the European Court of Justice. The managing Director of the project is Philip Worthington who has been the coordinator of the project in Lesvos since the beginning. The Memorandum of Understanding between the CCBE/DAV and the Greek Minister was renewed for one year and therefore continues to guarantee the project access to the reception center of Moria to provide legal assistance.

How can you support the ELIL project in the future?

Support to the project can be brought in two ways:

- **Funding:** the project needs continuing financing, so Bars/organisations which would be interested to bring new financial contributions would be very welcome. The project is now receiving funding from the international non-governmental organisation, Oxfam. However, this funding cannot cover the entire costs of the project, therefore other sources of funding are needed.



- **Call for volunteer lawyers:** thanks to the publicity given by Bars/organisations to the project, a high number of candidacies have been received since the launch of the project. We would be very grateful if you could continue to publish the calls for volunteers. Please find in annex the call for the period January to March 2018.

The context in which the ELIL project operates continues to be challenging. Whilst efforts have been made to move vulnerable individuals from Lesvos to the Greek mainland, over 8,500 applicants for international protection remain on the island, at least 6,300 of whom are in Moria Reception and Identification Centre. The majority of these individuals are from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and include many women and children. At the same time, many of the non-governmental organisations previously present on Lesvos have either withdrawn or reduced their presence, as funding from the EU has ceased to be available to them and has been channelled instead to the Greek state to provide the relevant services. In particular, this has caused a significant reduction in the number of lawyers providing pro bono legal assistance to applicants for international protection on Lesvos.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Please find in annexe: (a) the call for volunteers (January-March 2018) and (b) the latest infographics.

For any further information, please visit the project website at <http://www.europeanlawyersinlesvos.eu/> and/or contact the Managing Director Philip Worthington email pworthington@europeanlawyersinlesvos.eu.

Yours sincerely,

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President of the
Council of Bars and
Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

Ulrich Schellenberg
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