

Livry-Gargan, le 21 mars 2020

to the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mrs Ekaterini Sakellaropoulou,
Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis,
Minister Giorgos Koumoutsakos, in charge of migration policy,

Excellencies,

It is as a French citizen, a direct descendant of Constantinos Kanaris, through his son Lycurgue, and in memory of his glorious actions for the independence and renown of Greece, that I address you, concerning the fate of the migrants currently stranded at your borders with Turkey.

You are aware of the situation, and I am not going to revisit here the cowardice of the European Union, which is leaving its southern countries to bear almost on their own the burden of migration from the East and Africa. In this respect, I have long denounced, together with all the NGOs concerned, the French Government's despicable policies and the police violence of which it is guilty, particularly in the Pas-de-Calais and the Alpes Maritimes departments, as well as its judicial harassment of French citizens who come to the aid of migrants and exercise their imperative duty to assist people in danger.

I know that you are also direct victims - and first and foremost the populations of the islands - of the blackmail by the simulacra-sultan who now reigns over Turkey. His policy is very close to that which you yourselves had to put up with, in the not so distant past, and which your membership of Europe protects you from today.

It goes without saying that the cowardice, blackmail and crimes of some do not excuse those of others: The behaviour of your police towards migrants, of which many reports appear in the world press, is a stain on your flag – to some extent mine also because of my ancestry – a stain likely to remain indelible if you do not take the necessary decisions concerning the perpetrators of these abuses and violence. They are unacceptable as they are inflicted on men, women and children merely acting for their survival by fleeing from wars and from extreme violence.

Shooting with live ammunition, attempting to sink makeshift "boats", stripping their clothes and stealing all the personal belongings of candidates for exile, holding them in secret centres before expulsion, allowing or even inciting violent actions by those nostalgic for the so-called "colonels' regime", are all intolerable violations of international law and of your own laws. Either these acts were carried out by uncontrolled elements of your police forces, and I would be grateful if you could let me know what sanctions will be or have already been taken against them; or these elements of your police force – forgetting the imperative duty of disobedience to manifestly illegal orders – obeyed orders from their hierarchy and political leaders, in which case you would be obviously held responsible before international justice.

I urge you, in remembrance of my ancestor, to stop dishonouring the whole of Greece by these inhuman policies.

Please accept, Excellencies, in Greek brotherhood, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Bernard Defrance, philosopher

(traduction Alain Cornec)