On 21st August 2018, Greek Police arrested humanitarian workers Mr Séan Binder and Ms Sarah Mardini on several charges, including that of human trafficking. They were subsequently taken into Mytilene police station, questioned, and detained on orders by the Magistrate of Mytilene and remain in detention since then.

When arrested, both Séan and Sarah were volunteering with Emergency Response Centre International (ERCI), a Greek non-profit humanitarian organisation that runs a search and rescue programme in Lesvos, as well as a medical clinic offering primary care in the Moria refugee camp. The organisation was well known, was cooperating with the relevant Greek Authorities and had their authorisation, both on the search and rescue operations as well as inside the Moria refugee camp.

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, wish not to interfere in the substance of the judicial proceedings and we have absolute confidence in integrity and impartiality of the Greek judicial system, as proven with the recent case of the Spanish coastguards.

However, we strongly believe that humanitarian workers do not pose a threat to society and should not be treated as criminals. We join our voices to those of their families, of the Universities where Sarah and Séan are studying, of other humanitarian NGOs and organisations and of all the people around Europe who appreciate the efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need or in distress at sea.

We call, therefore, for any appropriate action to be taken by the relevant Greek Authorities in order to free Séan and Sarah until their trial. To this end, we would urge the relevant authorities of the UNHCR in Greece to contribute by providing to the Greek Justice all the necessary elements for them to properly conduct their work.

Guy Verhofstadt (Chair of the ALDE group)
Ska Keller (Co-Chair of the GREENS/EFA group)
Gabi Zimmer (Chair of the GUE/NGL group)
Claude Moraes (Chair of the LIBE Committee)
Birgit Sippel (Coordinator for the S&D group in LIBE Committee)
Cornelia Ernst (Coordinator for the GUE/NGL group in LIBE Committee)

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)
Malin Björk (GUE/NGL)
Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL)
Klaus Buchner (GREENS/EFA)
Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL)
Tanja Fajon (Vice-Chair of the S&D group)
Ana Gomes (S&D)
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Jean Lambert (GREENS/EFA)
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Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)
Sabine Lösing (GUE/NGL)
Martina Michels (GUE/NGL)
Stelios Kouloglou (GUE/NGL)
Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL)
Liadh NiRiada (GUE/NGL)
Dimitrios Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL, EP Vice President)
Morten Helveg Petersen (ALDE)
Maria Heubuch (GREENS/EFA)
Christine Revault d'Allonnes-Bonnefoy (S&D)
Jens Rohde (ALDE)
Martin Schirdewan (GUE/NGL)
Elly Schlein (S&D)
Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL)
Lidia Senra Rodríguez (GUE/NGL)
Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL)
Bart Staes (GREENS/EFA)
Miguel Urban Crespo (GUE/NGL)
Ernest Urtasun (GREENS/EFA)
Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)
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