



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

MINISTRY OF MARITIME AFFAIRS & INSULAR POLICY

Minister of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy, Giannis Plakiotakis

Statement on immigration in the Aegean Sea

Piraeus 17.06.2020

“It is a self-evident obligation and duty for every country to secure and protect its borders. Even more so when their violation is systematically and deliberately attempted.

This is exactly what Greece is doing on land and at sea. Its self-evident duty.

Especially at sea, the men and women of the Hellenic Coast Guard are operating with consistency, determination and sensitivity in human life.

They perform their duty while being fully aware that, unfortunately, Turkey not only does not respect its commitments to the European Union, but, on the contrary, actively seeks the illegal entry of refugees and immigrants into Greece.

Turkish coastguard patrol boats clearly escort migrants to the sea border, disregarding their safety and even their lives in order to serve geostrategic aspirations. The visual evidence for this is ample and well known. Furthermore, the Turkish Coast Guard, in most cases, refuses to respond, as it is obliged to, to our calls.

It is indisputable that the Greek authorities operate with absolute respect for international and European law, as well as the rules of engagement at sea. After all, Greece has consistently demonstrated its commitment to applying international law at all times.

The only one provocatively violating international law is Turkey, blackmailing the European Union by using unfortunate people as “weapons”.

Anyone expecting that our country will leave its borders unprotected, is grossly mistaken.

Greece is guarding and will continue to decisively safeguard its borders, which are also the borders of the European Union, with respect for international law, sensitivity and determination.

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