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Sent: lundi 19 octobre 2020 18:39
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Subject: VTC between Ms Pariat and Ms Santana, Minister for Social Rights, Equality, Diversity and Youth, Regional government of the Canary Islands - 19.10.2020

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear colleagues

Please find below a flash on the VTC which took place today between Ms Pariat and Ms Santana.

Kind regards,

Etienne

Minister Santana was accompanied by Ms Martinez (Deputy Minister for Social Affairs) and the Director General for European affairs and the Director for child care of the regional administration. E de Perier (HOME C4) and S Germe (HOME E2) attended as note takers.

Minister Martinez underlined the specific situation of the Canary Islands as an ultra-peripheral region and EU Southern border. She underlined the current pressure with 9,223 arrivals of irregular migrants as of today. Migrant profiles are changing, with more unaccompanied minors (1,202 in 2020; 359 in 2019) and women (46). Most migrants are economic migrants however. The Canary Government has serious concerns with the burden which the increase of minors is implying for the regional budget (minors protection is a direct competence of regional authorities). Specific funding had been put in place between 2010 and 2014 but do not exist anymore. Another problem is with migrants staying/blocked in the islands (already about 9,000) as long as the Ministry of Interior does not enable their transfers to mainland Spain. In an economic crisis context, this will create political problems.

Last 9 September, the consultative Canary Migration Forum met and agreed on a series of needs and requests which included asking for more EU emergency funds to help Canary to deal with the current crisis situation, the urgent adoption of a new European Pact supported by an ambitious budget and the launch of a Frontex SAR mission in the Atlantic. Following the presentation of the Pact, the government considers that, with its focus on asylum, it does not fully encapsulate the specific migratory situation of

the Canary islands, nor mentions the particularity of ultra-peripheral regions as should however be the case according article 349 TFEU.

MP explained the EC is well aware of the situation. Emergency funding are already used in the Canary Islands through an humanitarian assistance project managed by the Red Cross. The EC stands ready to look at an additional EMAS funding request but authorities must be aware that funds are limited (due to end of the programming period and COVID-19 context). MP clarified that EMAS is available for all sorts of migration related projects and this include UAMs. Requests need however to be channelled by the central government. Furthermore if Canary authorities wish to benefit from specific funding for UAMs, they should negotiate with Madrid a specific line for the next programming period (2021-2027) and consider not only migration related budgetary lines but also integration funds, based on the ESF.

MP also emphasised that the issue of minors is a clear concern and priority of the Pact since it includes a series of measures aiming at protecting children in general, including UAMs, and reinforcing their rights.

MP explained key priorities of the Pact, as regards a better integration of migration in our partnerships and relations with third countries (legal channels, fight against smuggling and trafficking, readmission), improving EU return policy (by improving cooperation with third countries but also by increasing the role and support by Frontex) and SAR activities (considering that solidarity mechanism is mandatory in case of SAR); suggested the Canary authorities to discuss with the central government on reinforced cooperation with Frontex on border control and returns; invited the authorities to ensure that Spanish central government presents any possible EMAS request without delay; agreed to reflect together with DG REGIO about how Art 349 TFEU might be reflected in the migration proposals, in particular as regards funding needs for addressing UAMs policies.

Ms Martinez invited Commissioner Johansson and DG Pariat to visit the Canary Islands as soon as possible to have a first-hand understanding of the situation.

Etienne de Perier



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