

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Bottle mail from Greece**

Hikers, joggers and beach strollers on the Dutch beaches have found bottled mail in recent weeks.

The letters were written by refugees living in or around camps in Greece.

More than 600 handwritten letters were collected this summer by a number of people ashamed of the way in which Europe - including the Netherlands - deals with refugees who fled warzones and terror.

Bottle mail traditionally contains a cry for help, an S.O.S. and this also applies to these letters.

The letters were written by refugees in Samos, Lesbos, Leros, Chios and in Athens. Because it was not allowed in the camps themselves, they wrote their words on paper at, for example, squares, in harbours, playgrounds and in the sanctuaries of NGOs. The stories are personal and very poignant and paint a picture of miserable living conditions. The letters went back to the Netherlands and were scattered along the beaches, from Zeeland Flanders to the Wadden Islands.

The people behind the campaign hope that the finders of the bottle mail will be impressed by the stories and reflect deeply on the fate of the refugees. And perhaps some of them are willing to actively engage with the refugees, for example by organising projects in schools, churches or community centers, or by supporting aid organisations in Greece with donations or volunteering.

In any case, the writers of the letters in Greece have indicated that they would very much like their painful story to be heard and that there are still people who care about them and who are committed to improving their situation.

The letters contain a reference to the website [www.letterfromgreece.eu](http://www.letterfromgreece.eu). The finders of any bottle mail of this nature can find the translations on that website along with information and tips. The writers can find their letter on the website and put additional information, photos and a 'like' on it. These letters have their own page, as it were, through which they can also communicate with finders and the general public.

### **The group asks for direct action from politics:**

- In September 2015, the Netherlands promised to receive 8712 refugees from the Greek camps. That number only got a mere 1755 refugees. The Netherlands must absorb the number of people agreed with other countries according to the commitments made in 2015 as quickly as possible and insist on this with all EU member states.
- Find out what happens with the billions of Euros in European support in Greece.
- To not make any deals with countries outside Europe, but taking responsibility, complying with the UN Refugee Convention.

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