



Press Release

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Malta is consistent with the June 2018 European Council

With reference to a letter by members of the LIBE committee of the European Parliament, the Government of Malta reiterates that it has been consistently adhering to its international obligations regarding search and rescue of migrants in the Mediterranean region. This has been done despite that solidarity was not always forthcoming.

Furthermore, the Maltese Government has gone beyond its legal obligations and while it had no legal obligations in relation to the *MV Lifeline* and *Aquarius* incidents, being neither the competent nor the coordinating authority, the Maltese Government offered its cooperation and assistance nonetheless.

The Maltese Government would like to remind the members of the European Parliament that it has allowed vessels to disembark in order to avoid humanitarian crisis on numerous occasions and has led *ad hoc* initiatives of shared responsibility and solidarity, which has been unprecedented, considering the lack of agreement on the issue among European member states.

In addition, the June European Council - in its conclusions - has been unequivocal in its position regarding NGOs operating in the Mediterranean. The law must be respected in all instances and the operations of the Libyan Coast Guard should not be obstructed.

Malta's position in this regard is consistent with the European Council decision of June 2018.

The matters outlined by MEPs during their mission are subject to ongoing court procedures and in line with the rule of law principle, the Government of Malta believes that the ongoing judicial process must take its course, following which decisions will be taken based on court judgements.