26th June 2023

53rd Session Item 3 Interactive dialogue Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

On behalf of Defence for Children International (DCI) - Greece

Mr. President,

On 15th June the world woke up to a catastrophic shipwreck where hundreds of people including children lost their lives in their efforts to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Unfortunately, this tragedy is only the latest one a in a long chain of similar ones just because politicians have not made a conscious decision yet to regularise the routes people undertake in order to reach safety. Only by establishing safe and legal pathways for these people the mourning will stop.

However, it is important not to forget that lost childhoods and the lost passports to a future for the hundreds of children who live amongst us in our societies in irregular contexts. These children who are accompanied or unaccompanied and the ones who have just transitioned to adulthood are experiencing great challenges in accessing education, health, housing, food and clean water in many instances. These children are exposed to the hands of traffickers, and they are experiencing the worst forms of exploitation. Very often also they end up in detention centres.

It is of paramount importance to realise that people will keep on moving in search of a better future to other countries. Only by regularising their efforts and by providing them with the opportunity to become part of our societies, these children won't be a footnote in our societies' life stories.

Thank you.