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President of the European Commission  
Ms Ursula Von der Leyen  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1040 Brussels

Brussels, 23.05.2024

### **Lighthouse Reports investigation on „desert dumps“**

Dear President Von der Leyen;  
Dear Commissioner Schinas;  
Dear Commissioner Varhelyi;

According to a recent investigation by Lighthouse Reports, published in collaboration with the media outlets Der Spiegel, The Washington Post, Tagesschau, Le Monde, Enass, Inkyfada, IrpiMedia and El Pais, "Europe is knowingly funding, and sometimes directly involved in, systematic expulsions of Black refugees and migrants to deserts and remote areas across three North African countries, in a bid to prevent them from coming to the EU". <sup>1</sup>

The investigation provides evidence that refugees and migrants, as well as people with legal status, are apprehended based on their skin colour, loaded onto buses and driven to desert areas, often close to borders. Once they are off the buses, people receive no further assistance and risk death in the worst cases.

Concrete examples of European involvement in these practices include direct EU funding of Moroccan paramilitary auxiliaries who have been filmed rounding up black people in the capital, or the use of member state funded vehicles to arrest migrants before they are driven into the desert.

Is the European Commission aware of the practice of 'desert dumping' in North African countries and what will be the consequences for funding and human rights due diligence? What measures are being taken to ensure that EU funding for migration management does not lead to human rights abuses?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lighthousereports.com/investigation/desert-dumps/>

How will you ensure that recent and planned migration agreements between the EU and Southern Neighbourhood countries do not lead to further human rights abuses in the countries concerned?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erik Marquardt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

MEP Erik Marquardt