

## **Irish people spell out their welcome to refugees ahead of crucial EU meeting**

Members of the public joined a coalition of NGOs on Dublin's Sandymount Strand today [Sunday 13th] in a solidarity event to welcome refugees to Ireland. They created a human "Refugees Welcome" aerial photo ahead of an extraordinary meeting of the EU Council of Justice & Home Affairs (JHA) Ministers on Monday (September 14th).

The event highlighted a number of calls to action;

- For the Irish government to show leadership and **be a strong voice for the rights of refugees and migrants at a European level.**
- Urge Member States to work together to develop a **comprehensive European plan** that provides **safe and legal channels of migration**, and respond to the severity and scale of the crisis, including planning for and agreeing increased numbers of people seeking protection.
- To focus on developing and **implementing a transparent and accelerated process of relocation and resettlement**, with clear guidelines and timeframes in place, with a emphasis on expanding legal channels of migration across the European Union including less rigid family reunification measures.
- Address the increasing needs of people not in receipt of even the most basic assistance. While the EU has taken steps to present a plan, Member States have a responsibility to provide basic protection and services for those whose situation is worsening by the day.
- Immediately suspend the return mechanism Dublin Regulation in Ireland and call on other European Union member states to do likewise.
- The Irish and European response to encompass the full range of issues at stake, including obligations under international law and commitments to international development.
- Call on EU member states to address the root causes of forced migration such as the situation in Syria and invest in urgent political solutions to conflict and inclusive socio-economic development across Africa and the Middle East.
- Continue the vital search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean throughout the winter, and to agree a new life-saving strategy for arrivals through Greece and the and the Balkans.