…………………………………… June 2020

Mr. Zoran Milanović

President of the Republic of Croatia

Office of the President

Pantovčak 241

10 000 Zagreb - **Croatia**

Mr. President,

As a member/supporter of ACAT-Switzerland, the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the Death Penalty, I am writing to you regarding the

**situation of migrants in Croatia and at its borders**

According to reliable sources of information on the ground, thousands of migrants are being violently hindered by Croatian border guards and police units to enter Croatia from Bosnia-Herzegovina or Serbia and are pushed back, sometimes with the help of heavy military equipment. These forces often shatter, burn or confiscate the migrants’ belongings, *inter alia*, their phone, an essential ally of their run to safety and future administrative proceedings in any EU member state. As a consequence of push-backs by Croatia, these migrants are obliged to live in miserable camps in neighboring countries, under cruel, inhuman or degrading conditions, where basic needs are not covered (water, heating, food, electricity, beds, clothes, …) because these countries lack the necessary resources to do so. Cursory expulsions of aliens without considering their basic needs offend the asylum acts and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, of which Croatia is a member. Such violent expulsions also contravene the 1951 Refugee Convention, the UN Convention against Torture (CAT), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Croatia is bound to these texts and treaties and is obliged to respect and apply them, in particular the principle of non-refoulement.

I therefore urge you, Mr. President, to:

• **guarantee migrants admittance to an asylum procedure in Croatia and respect their rights;**

**• guarantee access to decent accommodation for migrants pending their asylum procedure in Croatia;**

* **guarantee them access to medical care and treatment, including accessibility to tests, treatment and prevention against Covid-19;**
* **guarantee them access to adapted hygiene in duly disinfected zones, with full access to running water;**
* **sanction any state agent held responsible for violations of the above mention treaties and legal texts, in particular the Refugee Convention and of the Convention against Torture.**

I thank you for the attention you will give to this concern.

Yours respectfully,

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**Copy:**

**Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Wetstraat 200, 1094 Brussels, Belgium**