ustic and om ffairs ouncil c mb r ading human rights groups call for r n w d commitm nt to solidarity and action to prot ct childr n in migration at bord rs

The humanitarian and protection needs at various EU borders, including of unaccompanied children and those with families, are escalating at the onset of winter. Recent developments in Afghanistan heightened these needs, with roughly half of the asylum applications of unaccompanied children in the EU coming from Afghan individuals in August 2021. Moreover, amid increased arrivals at various EU maritime³ and land borders, most recently those of Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, children, travelling with families or alone, are at risk of human rights violations including refoulement and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance as well as access to asylum procedures, dignified reception conditions and adequate support.

Rather than introducing derogations to the EU asylum acquis⁸ that undermine the right to asylum,⁹ w urg th institutions and mb r tat s

as they attempt

to reach other EU countries irregularly to join family members or seek adequate protection. ¹⁸ tr ngth ning I gal pathways and transnational cas manag m nt whil r moving syst mic d fici nci s¹⁹ in ublin family r union proc dur s, which leave unaccompanied children in legal limbo, exposed to multiple risks including trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

tr ngth ning trust and coop ration b tw n mb r tat s by all viating th pr ssur and mitigating political t nsions at bord rs, which put the lives and safety of children and families at risk.

oncr t actions include:

EU Member States, with support from the European Commission, should acc I rat family r union and initiat furth r voluntary r location of unaccompani d childr n from bord r ar as and mb r tat s particularly aff ct d by arrivals of individuals s ing prot ction at the onset of winter.

2. BU institutions and agencies should develop a transpar nt op rational fram wor for transnational proc dur s within th including family r union and r location. This can be applied by all actors involved across the BU. The framework should include principles for model standard operating proc dures for transnational procedures ractical guidance on procedural safeguards and child centred interest agency case management concerning unaccompanied children should also be developed. The framework should further include action and designate resources to strengthen and increase the availability of