

The New Pact on Migration ends the individual right to asylum in the EU and will cost more lives at sea

The outcome of the final trilogue negotiations on the New Pact on Migration is a turning point and one of the most blatant displays of disrespect to human rights and the suffering along European borders. With the agreement on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the EU has decided to formalize a status quo where violence, neglect, torture, and leaving people to die are every day practice. Recent years have shown a wide range of cruel practices towards people arriving in Europe: cramming them into camps like Moria, separating children from their parents, preventing boats from arriving to a safe shore in the Aegean Sea, beating people unconscious along the Croatian border or letting them freeze to death at the Polish border. With the agreement that has now been reached, all of this will continue and, indeed, become formalized.

We are shocked to see how the lives lost at sea are used to justify these politics of violence.

Today, the EU had the chance to live up to a promise made by the European Commission 10 years ago, after 368 people drowned in a single shipwreck off Lampedusa. Back then, the European Commission stated that their deaths should be a wake-up call to increase solidarity and mutual support and prevent similar tragedies in the future. The deaths of 600 people in the shipwreck off Pylos this year was not even worth any more empty promises. In fact, 2023 was one of the deadliest years ever in the central Mediterranean. At least 2,210 people lost their lives.

With today's agreement, the EU missed the chance to agree on core mechanisms to put an end to the dying at sea. There would have been alternatives that actually could have saved lives: safe and legal routes to Europe, a European search and rescue program, and the fair distribution of people on the move across EU Member States.

Instead, the EU institutions have decided to actively gut the rights of those seeking protection, legalising the violations of EU asylum law by the member states. The New Pact will restrict access to protection in Europe by introducing fast-track asylum procedures at the border to speed up returns. The failed Dublin system will be retained, and no genuine solidarity mechanism will be introduced to support EU Member States at external borders. There is not a single solution presented to sustainably organise secondary migration within the EU. Instead, the proposal will isolate refugees from the rest of society, detain them in remote camps and prevent any form of integration. There are no safe and legal routes established to seek protection in the EU. Instead,

the aim is to declare various third countries as safe, even if these countries persecute their own nationals or do not even grant legal status to refugees.

All of this will force more people to try to flee by sea, and choose ever more dangerous routes. Again and again, more lives will be lost. Not one single life will be saved by today's decision.

Europe has decided to learn from its worst examples. This agreement is a historic failure and a bow to the right-wing parties of Europe.

Signatory organisations as of 19th of December 2023:

Sea-Eye e.V.
SOS Humanity e.V.
r42 - sailandrescue
MV Louise Michel
Maldusa
MARE*GO
SARAH gUG
Iuventa
Captain Support

Mediterranea
Salvamento Marítimo Humanitario
United4Rescue - Gemeinsam Retten e.V.
Seebrücke
Compass Collective
RESQSHIP e.V.
Sea-Watch e.V.
MISSION LIFELINE International e.V.
Borderline Europe

