

Stop the Externalisation of European Borders



Brussels, 24.06.2018. The civil rescue fleet urges the EU and its member states to stop the ongoing externalisation of their borders, carried out through a policy of containment of migration and pull-backs by proxy. Instead of focusing on the criminalisation of the civil rescue NGOs, we ask for solidarity amongst the European states (Art. 80 TFUE) and towards the people in need of international protection.

We are witnessing, with great concern, the political developments of the recent days. The EU holds on to the aim of externalising migration and asylum policies. Despite the ineffectiveness and corresponding suffering of the current approach, further attempts to seal all European borders are taking place this weekend. This course of action undermines basic human rights guaranteed in the European Convention on Human Rights, of which all member states of the European Union are signatory parties, and enhances the level of abuse, eventually resulting in preventable deaths. At least 960 people have died in the Mediterranean in 2018 already, of which more than 200 during the last week only. These drownings are an immediate consequence of the lack of rescue capacities at sea. Whilst UNHCR is calling for improved search and rescue (SAR) efforts, European states continue criminalising the NGOs involved in SAR activities.

We are very alarmed by the proposal of „regional disembarkation platforms“, which stands for a punitive approach towards migration, exposing people in need of protection to a high risk of inhuman treatment, violence and sexual abuse due to a lack of accountability. Instead of an interim solution, such disembarkation centres become an unbearable long-term living condition depriving its inhabitants of adequate education, food and medical care.

Instead of externalising migration policies to third countries, effectively abolishing the access to asylum in the EU, the member states must acknowledge their responsibility. The deadlock related to the Dublin IV reform must be resolved as it leaves Italy, Spain and Greece alone with migrants after first arrival. Recent events are demonstrating the direct impact of abandoning those responsibilities. Spain opening its harbours for the Aquarius was a sign of solidarity. However, the vessels unnecessary journey burdened its passengers particularly heavily. Shuttling long distances is not a solution. Distribution must take place later onshore.

We condemn the latest threats by the Italian government against the SAR NGOs Mission Lifeline and Sea-Eye of confiscating their vessels, which would result in even more deaths. Such measures of repression towards civil society's engagement must come to an end.

We urge the European leaderships to agree on a migration policy, which respects the principle of non-refoulement and is based on solidarity, safe passage, access to the right to asylum according to International Human Rights Law, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Europe has to find its way back to a solidary policy-making.

Sea-Eye e.V. *borderline-europe*

RESQSHIP e.V.

mare liberum

Sea-Watch e.V.

MISSION LIFELINE
e.V.

Jugend Rettet e.V.



RESQSHIP

