

## OPEN LETTER

- **President of EU Commission, Jean Claude Juncker**
  - **First Vice-President, Frans Timmermans**
  - **High Representative, Federica Mogherini**
    - **Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos**
- **President of the European Council, Donald Tusk**
- **President of the Italian Council, Giuseppe Conte**

## Human Rights first!

**EU must at all costs avoid a moral defeat and put in practice its best reasons for existing: solidarity, defence of human rights and peace.**

**Rome, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Thousands of *boat-people* in search of a better future, or simply in search of survival, are landing daily on the southern borders of Europe. They land on European soil and are exhausted, hungry, frightened; many have been tortured and, if women, raped.

They are our brothers and sisters: they are part of the people EAPN work with and for, making no distinction as to where they come from or the color of their skin, aware as we are that only by chance were we fortunate enough to be born in the “right” part of the world.

In the face of this situation that threatens to put an end to the European Dream, EAPN Italy asserts the following:

- The European governments should stop entrenching themselves behind the hypocritical distinction between political and economic refugees. Whether they are fleeing death from hunger, poverty or from bombing does not make a difference.
- The European governments should implement the relocation scheme as agreed and expand this to cover the migrants who are currently arriving in desperation.
- At the next Summit of the EU Council of Head of State and Government (Brussels, June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2018), the Member States bordering the Mediterranean should agree to open their ports for the landing of the boats that saved these people at open sea, as requested by the Commission and the Italian government.
- The Dublin Agreement, which was signed in a different period, when this emergency was not even envisaged, needs to be revised in order to cover broader groups of migrants escaping poverty and favor reallocation and respect the right of those concerned to live and work in the country of their choice.
- The European governments should stop laying the blame and in some cases criminalizing, initially between the lines but more and more explicitly every day, on the NGOs that are

working at sea and saving thousands of lives every day. Instead they should be actively supported and resourced.

- No agreement should be made between the EU governments and countries, such as Libya, where there is no respect for human rights or lives. The agreement with Turkey should have taught us a hard lesson!

EAPN Italy also declares the following:

- The EU needs to open humanitarian corridors. Only by doing this will the refugees arrive in safety and will criminal organizations cease making money by smuggling (and killing) innocent people, many of whom are women and children.
- A huge, sustainable and democratic “Marshall Plan” for Africa and other sending countries with large scale investment designed together with the local population, needs to be put in place as soon as possible.

Lastly, EAPN Italy asks that the EU institutions and member states make all the necessary efforts to counter the xenophobic, racist and fascist wave of opinion, skillfully propagated and abetted in some quarters, that is not only putting the social cohesion and the future of Europe at serious risk, but that, if not stopped, will be the cause of the greatest European Union moral defeat.

**Thanks for your attention**

**For further information**, please contact:

**Nicoletta Teodosi**, Eapn Itay President, [info@cilap.eu](mailto:info@cilap.eu) +3476475198

The European Anti-Poverty Network Italy (EAPN) is a National network, Italian branch of the largest European Anti-Poverty network, involving anti-poverty organizations and grassroots groups active in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It was established in 1992.