

Welcome in Europe - our responsibility for asylum seekers

A position paper addressing politicians, men, women and all the population to rethink the policies towards migrants

Adopted by the General Assembly of MIJARC Europe on the 26th of July 2015

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more. ...”¹

We as MIJARC Europe demand the respect of the international conventions about migrants² and asylum rights.

Since the first Dublin - Regulation of 2003³ the European asylum policy has focused on warding off migration. According to this Regulation, asylum seekers have to submit their application for asylum in the Member State they entered first. People who seek protection in a European State from persecution, war or social exclusion in their country of origin, face big barriers and can reach the European Union only via dangerous routes. The controls and defensive measures taken at the outer borders of the EU, as for example by the European agency „FRONTEX“, increase the dangers of those seeking protection. According to estimates, about 23.000⁴ people have drowned off the shores of Europe between 2000 and 2013.

Following the multiple shipwrecks happening in the Mediterranean Sea and the fatalities on land, the urge is great not to take only emergency actions and short term measures. As a youth movement we stress the need to bring human and long term solutions to these problems. We as MIJARC Europe think that the European Union cannot continue to stay a fortress closed in on itself.

We are asking the European Union to respect Human Rights: *“Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”⁵*. Each human being who dies on the European Union's outer borders due to political decisions, is not just a tragedy in itself but also a

¹Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of migrants and refugees (2014): *Towards a better world*. Accessible at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html.

² For a definition, see the MIJARC Position Paper on Migration. Accessible at: <http://mijarc.net/sites/default/files/files/POSITION%20PAPER%20MIGRATION.pdf>.

³ For more information on the Dublin regulations, see The European Council on Refugees and Exiles: *Dublin Regulation*. Accessible at: <http://www.ecre.org/topics/areas-of-work/protection-in-europe/10-dublin-regulation.html>.

⁴ International Organization for Migration (2014): *Fatal Journeys. Tracking Lives Lost*. Accessible at: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/FatalJourneys_CountingtheUncounted.pdf.

⁵ United Nations: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article 13/2.

loss for the values of the European Union. It is high time to make its motto, “United in Diversity”, a reality. Treating people as numbers by implementing the Dublin Regulation has shown that at humanitarian level the EU has failed. **It is time to build a common policy of welcoming migrants and asylum seekers.** As a faith-based movement, our Christian values remind us of our obligation to care for those without protection: *“I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mt 25, 35)”*. **As an international youth movement we are sending a call to all European politicians to end the border shutdown on the outer frontiers of the European Union.**

It is useless to denounce this macabre human trafficking if we don't fight against the real causes of exile. It's a hard decision for everybody to leave his home country, but it is often the only way to survive. At the moment, armed conflicts equipped with weapons sold by European entities cause a vast majority of refugee movements. The EU should try with all its power to find a solution with a unique voice for these conflicts.

Excessive resource consumption, destruction of ecological systems and global changes driven by human activity lead to life-threatening situations and are also causing people to leave their country. Furthermore, we live in a very rich continent, we face a big responsibility to support economic activities that are sustainable at a global level. We want to fight against the causes of poverty, where they occur.

Let's start long term measures to make these countries able to find political, economic, and social stability. This development work cannot be only a financial aid from rich to poor countries. A lot of countries are rich in natural resources and assets which could allow them to develop themselves and give their people a chance to determine their own future. The predatory logic of international competition is the basis of unequal relationships between the world's regions. As a youth movement acting for social transformation and inclusion we want to fight against the exploitation of other countries and for disarmament in the world. The only efficient way to combat indignity created by forced migration is to struggle for more social equality between the continents, strengthening the support and rights of asylum seekers and having a fundamental change in the European asylum policy.

MIJARC Europe is raising awareness on the current situation with asylum seekers and is encouraging all young Europeans to raise their voice against the injustice the European asylum system is creating. The member movements of MIJARC Europe are held to start or continue national campaigns for a more humane treatment of asylum seekers.

We want the Dublin-regulations to come to an end: reality shows that it is not a humane system for the current wave of asylum seekers and it is an unfair system putting countries at the outer borders of the EU more under pressure than other ones. We urgently need a common European vision on migration and a concerted effort of all the member states for more humanity in European asylum policies.

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