

Joint NGO statement ahead of the European Council of 28-29 June 2016
NGOs strongly condemn new EU policies to contain migration

At the upcoming European Council, European Union (EU) leaders will discuss the **European Commission's Communication on a new Partnership Framework with third countries**. The Communication proposes an approach which aims to leverage existing EU and Member States' external cooperation instruments and tools in order to stem migration to Europe. The undersigned organisations express their grave concern about the direction the EU is taking by making deterrence and return the main objective of the Union's relationship with third countries. More broadly, this new Partnership Framework risks cementing a shift towards a foreign policy that serves one single objective, to curb migration, at the expense of European credibility and leverage in defence of fundamental values and human rights.

The proposed approach is inspired by the EU-Turkey deal which although touted as a successful example of cooperation, has actually left thousands people stranded in Greece in inhumane and degrading conditions. This has particularly affected children, with the result that hundreds of unaccompanied children have been held in closed detention facilities on the islands or forced to sleep in police cells on the Greek mainland. **The wider repercussions of this should not be underestimated. It is hard to see how Europe can ask partner countries to keep their doors open, to host large-scale refugee populations and prevent further movements while at the same time Member States refuse to shoulder their fair share of responsibility for protecting people who flee their homes.** The right to asylum is being significantly undermined, and it will become more and more challenging for civilians in conflict zones to seek international protection.

The Commission's proposal ignores all the evidence on the ineffectiveness of deterrence strategies aimed at stopping migration. **This approach will not only fail to "break the business-model" of smugglers but increase human suffering as people are forced into taking more dangerous routes. Moreover, despite the stated commitment to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, there are no safeguards envisaged to ensure that human rights, rule of law standards and protection mechanisms are in place. As a result, people risk being deported to countries where their rights are not safeguarded.** Responsibility and liability for human rights violations do not end at Europe's borders.

We are disappointed to see that once again the emphasis on deterrence leaves no clear commitments to open up safe and regular channels to Europe for those in need of international protection and for other migrants, e.g. through resettlement, humanitarian admission schemes, family reunification, educational visas, labour mobility and visa liberalisation. Resettlement, labour migration and visa liberalisation are only mentioned as possible leverage with partner countries in a quid pro quo approach.

Another major concern is the financing of the proposed Partnership Framework which would represent a wholesale re-orientation of Europe's development programming towards stopping migration. This is an unacceptable contradiction to the commitment to use development cooperation with the aim to eradicate poverty, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. **Aid is for the benefit of people**

in need, and should not be used as a leverage for migration control. EU funding should be transparent and adhere to clearly established principles, such as the Busan principles on effectiveness and the Paris principles of ownership by and alignment to partner countries' strategies. In addition, striking 'migration management' agreements with countries where grave human rights violations are committed will be counter-productive in the longer term – undermining human rights around the globe and perpetuating the cycle of abuse and repression that causes people to flee.

Migration has many drivers; people may be on the move in search of new livelihood opportunities, an education or to reunite with family, while conflict and violence, human rights violations, climate change, poverty and unemployment can all trigger migration and forced displacement. **Any cooperation to manage migration should take into consideration this complex and multi-faceted reality, be evidence and needs-based, and ensure that the benefits of migration are maximised and the risks are mitigated.**

If the EU wants to call for more global solidarity, it needs to set the right example. The EU, a project built on the rubble of a devastating war, is about to embark on a dark chapter of its history. We urge EU leaders to choose a rights-based system to manage migration, based on a viable long-term strategic vision, rather than pursuing an unattainable and inhumane deterrence objective and thereby abandoning its core founding principles.

As human rights, humanitarian, medical, migration and development agencies, and key implementing partners of development programmes in third countries, we call on European leaders to:

1. Reject the current Commission Communication and develop a sustainable long-term and evidence-based strategy for migration management, in consultation with civil society and experts.
2. Facilitate safe mobility by opening and strengthening safe and regular channels to Europe both for those in need of international protection and other migrants including through resettlement, humanitarian admission and humanitarian visas, family reunification, worker mobility across skill levels and student visas. Member States must commit to clear benchmarks and appropriate timelines for implementing a migration framework that meets the needs of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, their families, as well as the needs and obligations of Member States.
3. Exclude any conditionality based on migration control indicators in the allocation of development aid to third countries. Development aid is a tool to fight poverty and inequality, not to manage migration. Vulnerable populations should not be punished because of concerns that are largely political.
4. Stop any readmissions or removals of people by the EU to a third country that violate – or risk violating - fundamental rights and rule of law, including the principle of *non-refoulement*. Ensure access to protection, justice and effective remedy for all people in migration and asylum procedures.
5. Ensure transparency in the development of any instruments to manage migration and accountability for human rights violations resulting from EU migration policies.

6. Commit to a foreign policy and action focused on preventing and unlocking protracted crises. While the Communication mentions the need to address root causes of displacement in the long term, it does not include engagement to prevent and manage crises.

Signatories

1. 11.11.11
2. ACT Alliance EU
3. Action Contre la Faim (ACF)
4. ActionAid
5. Aditus Foundation
6. Afrique Culture Maroc
7. Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme
8. Aid Services
9. AMERA International/ Rights in Exile
10. Amnesty International
11. Amycos
12. Andalucía Acoge
13. ARCI
14. Asamblea de Cooperacion Por la Paz ACPP
15. Asgi - Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione
16. Asociacion por ti mujer
17. Asociacion Salud y Familia - Spain
18. Association for action against violence and trafficking in human beings-Open Gate La Strada Macedonia
19. Association for the Social Support of Youth
20. Ayuda en Acción
21. Bienvenidos Refugiados España
22. British Refugee Council
23. CAFOD
24. Care International
25. Caritas International Belgium
26. CCOO de Andalucía
27. Centre for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria
28. Centre for Youths Integrated Development
29. Centro de Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos PRO IGUAL
30. ChildFund Alliance
31. Church of Sweden
32. Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
33. Citizens' association for combating trafficking in human beings and all forms of gender-based violence
34. CNCD-11.11.11
35. Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado – CEAR
36. Concern Worldwide
37. CONCORD Europe

38. CONCORD Sweden
39. Conseil des Béninois de France
40. Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations in the Czech Republic
41. Coordinadora Andaluza de ONGD
42. Coordinadora Cantabra de ONGD
43. Coordinadora de Barrios
44. Coordinadora de ONGD de la Región de Murcia
45. Coordinadora de ONGD del Principado de Asturias
46. Coordinadora de ONGD España
47. Coordinadora de ONGD Navarra
48. Coordinadora Extremeña de ONGD
49. Coordinadora Gallega de ONGD
50. Coordinadora ONGD de Castilla y León
51. Coordinadora Valenciana de ONGD
52. Coordination des ONG pour les droits d'enfant
53. Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers (CIRÉ)
54. Cordaid
55. Detention Action
56. Detention Forum
57. Doctors of the World International network
58. EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS
59. EU-CORD Network
60. Eurochild
61. EuroMed Rights
62. European Association for the Defence of Human Rights
63. European Council on Refugees and Exiles
64. European Youth Forum
65. Federación Aragonesa de ONGD
66. Federación de Asociaciones de Derechos Humanos
67. Federation of Christian NGOs in Italy
68. FIACAT
69. FIDH
70. FIZ advocacy and support for migrant women and victims of trafficking
71. Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V.
72. Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations
73. Fundación 1º de Mayo de Comisiones Obreras
74. Fundación Alianza por los Derechos, la Igualdad y la Solidaridad Internacional –APS-
75. Greek Forum of Refugees
76. Habitat for Humanity International, Europe, Middle East and Africa
77. Handicap International
78. Hellenic Platform for Development
79. Human Rights Watch
80. Human Rights Without Frontiers
81. Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries
82. Inspiraction

83. Instituto Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo – ISCOD
84. InteRed
85. INTERSOS
86. Islamic Relief UK
87. Jesuit Refugee Service Europe
88. Justice and Peace Netherlands
89. KISA-Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism
90. Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz für internationale Entwicklung und Mission
91. La Strada International
92. Lafede.cat - Organitzacions per a la Justícia Global
93. Le Monde des Possibles
94. Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum
95. Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
96. Médecins Sans Frontières
97. Menedék - Hungarian Association for Migrants
98. Migrant Voice UK
99. Migrants' Rights Network
100. Movimiento contra la Intolerancia
101. Movimiento por la Paz – MPDL
102. Nasc, the Irish Immigrant Support Centre
103. Norwegian Refugee Council
104. Oxfam
105. PAX
106. Pax Christi International
107. PICUM-Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
108. Plan International EU office
109. Platform Minors in exile / Plate-forme Mineurs en exil / Platform Kinderen op de vlucht (Belgium)
110. PRO ASYL
111. Red Acoge
112. Refugee Aid Serbia
113. Réseau de Compétences Solidaires - Groupement d'Economie Sociale et Solidaire France - Europe - Afrique
114. Réseau Immigration Développement Démocratie - IDD
115. Save the Children
116. SOS Children's Villages International
117. SOS Racisme – Touche pas à mon pote
118. Stichting LOS
119. Swedish Refugee Advice Centre
120. Tamkeen Fields for Aid- Jordan
121. Télécoms Sans Frontières
122. Terre des Hommes International Federation
123. The International Federation of Social Workers European Region
124. The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture victims

- 125. The Norwegian Centre Against Racism
- 126. Translators without Borders
- 127. Trócaire
- 128. Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen (Flemish Refugee Action)
- 129. Welthungerhilfe
- 130. World Vision Brussels and EU Representation
- 131. ZOA