

IS THERE A FORM OF LIFE IN EUROPE?

ADOPTED: MAY 28, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Fortress Europe has during the past year manifested its' exceptional brutality, exposing the face of those who defend it. Fear and selfishness. Demagoguery and fascism. Whatever the motivation, the result is the same.

Deaths.

No borders, no barbed wires, no violent police or military will stop people on the move. Europe's asylum and migration policies will certainly have an effect on how much the people on the move will suffer and how many of them will die during their journey. But no policies will, nor can, stop the movement, whatever the nationalist discourses may suggest.

Immense tragedies in the Central Mediterranean in 2015 led to a welcomed increase in search-and-rescue capacities. Refugees, on the other hand, are increasingly exposed to the Eastern Mediterranean route. Now the EU has made a dirty deal with the increasingly authoritarian Turkish government, stating absurdly that "the EU and Turkey today decided to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU." Millions are stranded in the country without guaranteed legal protection. New catastrophes in the Central Mediterranean, when refugees are trying to reach Europe from Libya and Egypt, remind us the 'solutions' have, in fact, achieved nothing but to divert the crisis further from the dirty European conscience.

More deaths.

This raises the question: is there life in Europe?

The Federation of Young European Greens believes there is. The volunteers and multiple non-governmental organisations helping refugees along the borders, along the routes, and in the societies of destination. The activists who challenge Europe's internal and external borders, who demand another European project, a humane one, and who resist Fortress Europe. And, of course, the refugees who make it here are, and will be, a vital part of our common Europe.

There is a great deal of solidarity in Europe today. This is a massive force and it is on the rise. By nourishing and intensifying it, we will make sure that life prevails over death in Europe. However, we cannot foresee sustainable solutions based on ad-hoc volunteer involvement, when it is the very role of our states and the European Union's institutions to guarantee human rights, freedom of movement, welcoming and the inclusion of those who seek refuge.

Therefore, we demand that member states and institutions of the European Union:

1. Sustain wide, publicly funded search-and-rescue operations throughout the Mediterranean, wherever there are indications of a maritime migration route.
2. Ensure that the UNHCR and other essential non-governmental organisations can access refugee camps, detention centers, and other sites where refugees are held, both within the EU as well as in third countries such as Turkey.

3. Create safe and legal routes for refugees to reach Europe, in particular, humanitarian visas, adequate and effective resettlement programmes from countries bordering Syria, and facilitated family reunification.
4. Compel all EU countries along the Balkan route of refugees to renounce their decision to shut down the route, and strongly encourage all countries along the route to let refugees pass without intimidation.
5. Revoke the deal between the EU and Turkey of the 18 March 2016 on the grounds that it breaches international law.
6. Derecognize Turkey as a safe third country, based on numerous reports of forced return of refugees from Turkey's border with Syria, the incidents of Turkish violence against these people, as well as on the basis of Turkey's non-ratification and non-compliance with crucial international human rights treaties. Additionally, derecognize the Western Balkan states as safe third countries, based on the ongoing discrimination against e.g. homosexuals, Sinti and Roma. Moreover, FYEG opposes the addition of any other country to the list of safe third countries.
7. Provide more substantial (financial, HR) support to countries disproportionately affected by the inflow of migrants, who have become the solely responsible countries for the survival and well-being of thousands due to lack of intra-European solidarity.
8. Set up a redistribution programme that responds to the real needs of refugees, in particular, the 50 000 refugees trapped in Greece.
9. Ensure humane and dignified welcoming capacities for refugees and asylum-seekers, in the refugee camps but also in their societies of arrival. This includes fast access to mainstream education, healthcare, employment, and housing in order to facilitate quick integration.
10. Prioritise the refugees' crisis management by state investment, financial and legal action, and allocation of human and technical capacities, rather than the destructive and useless construction of walls and barriers.



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