
EU Pact on Migration and Asylum: for Caritas Italy “it’s a starting point to build on”

Relocation or return sponsorship. These are the most prominent features of the mandatory solidarity mechanism involving all Member States, underpinning the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum, presented today in Brussels by Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and EU Commissioner Ylva Johansson. The Pact, subject to Member States evaluation (the Czech Republic has already expressed criticism), reads as follows: "States will be required to repatriate - within eight months - a quota of migrants from the country of first entry. Should not all returns be completed within eight months, the partner State will welcome on its territory those who are still to be returned." The mechanism will be automatically triggered for migrants rescued at sea, with pre-determined directions for all landings. There are two options: a standard procedure for asylum applications, or a faster "border procedure." "We are proposing today a European solution, to rebuild trust between Member States and to restore citizens' confidence in our capacity to manage migration as a Union", said European Commission President **Ursula von der Leyen**. Italian Prime Minister **Giuseppe Conte** the Pact is "an important step towards a truly European migration policy. The European Council must now combine solidarity and responsibility. We need certainty on returns and redistribution: the countries of arrival cannot handle migration flows alone on behalf of Europe."

<https://twitter.com/GiuseppeConteIT/status/1308757360803033088> The reactions of Italian and European civil society differ significantly, including criticism.



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[it is “an important first step to build on, leading to real change in the coming decades. If the Dublin Regulation were to be amended, it would be a great achievement”, commented to SIR Oliviero Forti, Director of the Immigration Office at Caritas Italy. "The idea of moving towards the abolition of the Dublin Regulation and hence the possibility of not shifting all responsibilities and burdens of admittance onto the country of arrival is to be welcomed. Reference to the strategic role that can be played by some actors with regard to sea rescues is equally important."At the same time, Italian Caritas calls "for the restoration of a European rescue mechanism in conjunction with NGOs." Forti calls on the Italian Government to](#)

[“set a good example immediately by changing security regulations and ceasing to criminalize NGOs and solidarity.](#)

[Team efforts must be put in place. There is now a framework to work on, we expect results". With regard to accelerated procedures at borders, Caritas warns: "Accelerated procedures involve the serious risk of not properly evaluating the requirements for protection. We therefore need detailed information on how the procedures will be implemented and who will be involved in the processes. The boundaries of international protection are very precarious." In any event, he concludes, the Pact lacks a "vision of an inclusive and welcoming society", for "it is clear that no Member State is willing to accept it. We are evidently facing significant compromise solutions." For **Caritas Europe**, the new EU Pact "falls short of expectations", i. e. "balanced and humane policies". The position is expressed in a tweet: "We regret that the focus remains on preventing migration, on border control and returns."](#)

<https://twitter.com/CaritasEuropa/status/1308721402393047042> For **UNICEF** the Pact "provides a unique opportunity to prioritize children on the move" while **Oxfam** criticizes the Pact as "a new misstep in the wrong direction." The document, Oxfam points out, "is still far from delivering a genuine EU vision in the area of migration policy, based on shared responsibility and on the protection of migrants' fundamental rights." For example, as regards the relocation of migrants from States of first arrival, such as Italy, adherence by other Member States remains on a voluntary basis, given that it is a reform plan that outlines a general direction.

Oxfam made an urgent appeal "for an immediate change of course."

A few days ago Oxfam filed a complaint to the European Commission concerning violations of the human rights of migrants perpetrated by Greece with regard to inhuman conditions on the island of Lesbos.

Patrizia Caiffa