
Afghanistan. Card. Hollerich (COMECE) to European political leaders: “Act according to conscience”

An appeal to the political leaders of EU Member States on the plight of Afghan refugees: “Act according to conscience.” “The mere idea of placing these people in refugee camps is tantamount to sentencing them to despair.” Humanitarian corridors “are the sole effective response.” In a telephone interview with SIR, Cardinal **Jean-Claude Hollerich**, Archbishop of Luxembourg and President of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), commented on the emergency situation in Afghanistan. “We are watching tragic events unfolding in Afghanistan”, he said. “It pains me deeply to see the way in which these people are being treated. We had offered them hope and then we left to cope with hell. Moreover, I feel ashamed. Shame on Europe and on the West. We are constantly talking about values. Where are our values in Afghanistan today?.”



Immagine non disponibile

[Where did we go wrong? We pursued the wrong policy. All that is being discussed is what to do to avoid an influx of refugees, rather than actually helping these people. I am ashamed of this approach. Rather than a military defeat, there is talk of failure in international politics. Which lesson should be drawn for the future? Western society is not the only global power. We must accept this and act with greater caution. We were acting solely for the sake of economic values and not for the sake of the people.](#)

[There was a lack of political responsibility.](#)

[Now we must fill that vacuum. Greece finished building a wall along its border to protect itself from a new wave of Afghan refugees. What were your thoughts when you learned of this? This is another image that pains me and makes me feel ashamed: we are always talking about European values but we fail to put them into practice. It also worries me and reminds me of a changing vocabulary in European politics. There is no longer talk of refugees or asylum seekers under the Geneva Accords. In fact they are referred to as “illegal migrants”, which is alarming. The wall is a reflection of that mentality. I had hoped that the fall of the Berlin Wall would mark the end of the age of the walls. But it did not. New walls have been built. And it is not the workings of the past communist world, but of today's western, liberal, permissive European society. We have lost our](#)

conscience. **In the face of the people fleeing from that Dantean hell you mentioned earlier, what do you expect from the EU?** The Community of Sant'Egidio has responded effectively to the refugee problem through the humanitarian corridors. I fully agree with them. It is the sole successful response to crises and emergencies. Libya has camps for migrants arriving from Africa. And we are very well aware of the living conditions in those camps. The mere idea of placing these people in refugee camps is tantamount to sentencing them to despair. I therefore appeal to the European Union, to the men and women engaged in politics:

Act according to conscience.

Elections are forthcoming in Germany and France. A man and a woman taking political decisions just to be re-elected are bound to grow into a generation of very weak politicians.

M. Chiara Biagioni