

Open Letter to European Candidates on Migrations and Cooperation

Looking at migrations to think about Europe

Dear candidate,

the forthcoming elections of the European Parliament are the occasion to illustrate some considerations that we wish could become part of your political engagement in case you are elected.

Looking at migrations can help us think about Europe. Indeed, in these years when the ideal of a united Europe is questioned as never before, the governance of migrations can help us understand which perspectives we want to give to our common future. When dealing with migrations, it clearly appears that **two different ideas of Europe** exist.

The first one is focused on the need for security: it is an old, closed, bitter, selfish and xenophobic Europe. It is almost as if migrants were responsible for the crisis, whereas the difficult situation we are facing is due to different factors, and in particular to the economic and financial model adopted so far. This is a suicide vision, given the demographic forecasts, the gradual social and economic decline, and what is happening at our borders, especially in the Mediterranean region and in Africa.

The second is a more dynamic, open, courageous vision, aiming at a thorough human development and at the common good. A vision which affirms the values on which the European Union was based: peace building and solidarity among people. Within this Europe migrants represent an added value, since they are involved in the social and democratic emancipation, in economic innovation, in new relationships of cooperation with origin and transit countries.

The European Commission has launched long ago, a **Global Approach to Migrations and Asylum** which needs to be supported by a political vision of an open and united Europe. Such an Approach should focus on a gradual harmonisation of national policies, leading to a common policy on migrations and international protection.

Therefore, we ask you to engage to support an European policy that should be composed of:

- a set of measures to receive migrants based on the respect of human rights and a widespread network of services in subsidiarity to local communities, with alternative actions to centres and inhuman administrative detention;

- some important programs for social and humanitarian protection, fight against human trafficking and trade, recognition of the right to asylum and resettlement through a revision of the Dublin regulation, and recognition of the refugees' right to join their families in whichever European country they live in;
- some directives to increase the opportunities for mobility and regularisation for family reunification and access to the labour market, going beyond a selective approach which discriminates the poorer persons and families;
- to harmonise, within Member Countries, the administrative voting rights and the procedures for granting citizenship to migrants, by extending the principle of *ius soli*;
- monitoring and promoting, at European level, an effective application of national plans against racism and discriminations towards migrants and minorities, as well as against the new forms of slavery on the labour market;
- some initiatives to value migrants and their families, by recognising them as important stakeholder for European and origin countries' development, through new forms of social and international cooperation;
- a special plan for the Mediterranean region, which should be considered not only as an European border to be patrolled, but as a shared area, a Mare nostrum where it is possible to favour young people fulfillment, experiences of dialogue, places of arrival and cultural, social and economic exchange, according to the historical intuition of Giorgio La Pira.

Signatories:

Monsignor Giancarlo Perego
Director General Fondazione Migrantes

Father Francesco Soddu
Director Caritas Italiana

Father Giovanni La Manna
President Centro Astalli of Rome

Father Michele Autuoro
Director Fondazione Missio

Gianfranco Cattai
President Focsiv