

8 March 2017

Dear Heads of State and Government,

We are civil society organisations, which are supported, collectively, by hundreds of thousands of people across Europe, working with those less fortunate to alleviate poverty, provide essential aid and defend people's rights.

With xenophobic populism on the rise across Europe and the globe, this is an appeal for leadership to uphold the rights and values that have been founding principles of the European Union for 60 years. Together, we need to prevent legitimate concerns about migration management from being hijacked and used to derail the European project.

On a daily basis, we witness widespread solidarity with people who are fleeing brutal wars, persecution, human rights violations, instability, and extreme poverty. Throughout Europe and the world, we see people welcome refugees and migrants into their communities, open up their homes and donate money, materials and time to help. Only this week, many of them travelled to Brussels to call on you to uphold your commitments to relocate asylum seekers from Greece and "Bring Them Here". We also hear people expressing their concerns about the future, asking their governments to show leadership and respond to the arrival of large numbers of people.

We take pride in the European commitment to international law and human rights and we look to you to foster and promote this commitment at home and abroad. Yet when increasing numbers of people in need arrived in the summer of 2015, Europe failed to come together and respond with humanity, dignity, and solidarity. To this day, European nations are unwilling to respond in line with their obligations under international and European law, defaulting to responses that keep people far away and out of sight.

We hear you repeating your commitment to European values – respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights. But we expect to see them in your actions, too. Too many leaders have been preoccupied with stopping people from reaching Europe, at the risk of reducing access to protection for those who need it the most.

You have the responsibility to manage migration in a fair manner that addresses the legitimate concerns of citizens. It must be principled and based on facts, not on populist rhetoric. Strength doesn't mean turning away those most in need. Strength is about showing a way forward that upholds values.

Further, if the EU and its member states want to remain credible international actors, they cannot expect countries like Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon to host millions of refugees, while simultaneously pushing migrants and refugees back at EU borders, stranding thousands in inhumane living conditions on the Greek islands, or pushing them back into an uncontrolled conflict zone like Libya. Your decisions have life and death consequences, and if you continue to lower standards, countries around the globe will follow suit.

Instead of countering the rise of xenophobic populists, Europe's response has too often been to copy their recipes. But an approach based on deterrence and border closures cannot override an effective long-term policy. We expect statesmanship that stands up for humanity and dignity and that addresses people's fears, instead of fuelling them. We expect sustainable, long-term migration policies that guarantee respect for people's rights rather than pushing them into danger. These include expanding safe and regular pathways to Europe, such as humanitarian and other visas, increasing resettlement spaces and improving access to family reunification schemes, as well as improving worker mobility across skill levels. Other global concerns such as conflict and instability, poverty, inequality and climate change must remain at the top of the European agenda.

You and your governments must assess the impact of your policies on the human rights and living conditions of women, men and children on the move, as well as Europe's long standing commitment to uphold these rights and improve the lives of people everywhere.

On the brink of the European Union's 60th anniversary we ask you to show solidarity, respect for humanity and dignity, and responsibility. We ask you to be truly inspiring leaders for the future. Our commitment to the European Union's core values cannot falter. Only a Europe that really stands by its values can be a strong and credible leader in a world shaken by increasing populism and so-called alternative facts.

European history is full of people who were forced to flee their homes due to war and persecution. The work European nations have done to develop and protect the rights of people over the last 70 years cannot be lost. Only a Europe that defends the rights of everyone, without exception, is a Europe we can be proud of.

Signatories

- 1 A Proposito di Altri Mondi Onlus
- 2 ACAT
- 3 ACRA
- 4 ACT Alliance EU
- 5 Action Against Hunger
- 6 ActionAid Italy
- 7 ADP Amici dei Popoli
- 8 African Media Association Malta
- 9 Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme
- 10 Al.BI. Amici dei Bambini
- 11 AIDOS
- 12 Albanian Human Rights Group (AHRG)
- 13 AMERA International
- 14 Amnesty International
- 15 Anna Lindh National Network in Finland

- 16 AOI – Associazione Organizzazioni Italiane cooperazione e solidarietà internazionale
- 17 ARCI
- 18 ARCS
- 19 Arsis
- 20 ASGI - Associazione Studi Giuridici Immigrazione
- 21 Asociacion en Prevencion y Asistencia de la Violencia APAV
- 22 Asociación pro derechos humanos de España (APDHE)
- 23 ASPEm Onlus
- 24 Associació Salut i Família
- 25 Assocation for Integration and Migration (SIMI)
- 26 Associazione K_Alma
- 27 ASTI - Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés
- 28 Austrian Red Cross
- 29 CARE International
- 30 CARITAS - Luxembourg
- 31 Caritas Europa
- 32 CEFA Onlus
- 33 CEFIS
- 34 CELIM
- 35 Centar za integraciju mladih
- 36 Centro per la Formazione alla Solidarietà Internazionale
- 37 Cercle de Coopération
- 38 CESVI
- 39 CIAI
- 40 CICSENE
- 41 CIES
- 42 CIRÉ (coordination et initiatives pour réfugiés et étrangers)
- 43 CISV Onlus
- 44 Civic Committee for Human Rights from Croatia (CCHR)
- 45 CLAE
- 46 CODE - Coordination des ONG pour les droits de l'enfant
- 47 COMI
- 48 Comitato Collaborazione Medica CCM
- 49 Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)
- 50 Concord Italia
- 51 CONCORD Sweden
- 52 Consejo de la Juventud de España
- 53 Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations in the Czech Republic
- 54 Consorzio Ong Piemontesi COP
- 55 Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo – España
- 56 Coordinamento Italiano NGO Internazionali
- 57 Cordaid
- 58 COSPE Onlus

- 59 CrEA Onlus
- 60 CVM Comunità Volontari per il Mondo
- 61 Danish Refugee Council
- 62 Detention Action
- 63 Diaconia - Center of Relief and Development
- 64 DNK - German National Committee for International Youth Work
- 65 Doras
- 66 Dorcas Aid International
- 67 Dutch Council for Refugees
- 68 Dutch League for Human Rights (DLHR)
- 69 EMERGENCY ONG – ONLUS
- 70 EU-CORD
- 71 EuroMed Rights
- 72 European Association for the Defence of Human Rights (AEDH),
- 73 European Evangelical Alliance
- 74 European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation ENGSO Youth
- 75 European Youth Forum
- 76 Federación de Asociaciones para la Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos España
- 77 FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)
- 78 Finnish League for Human Rights (FLHR)
- 79 Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission
- 80 Finnish Refugee Council
- 81 FMSI
- 82 FOCSIV – Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario
- 83 Fondazione Fontana
- 84 Fundación Atabal
- 85 Generation 2.0 for Rights ,Equality and Diversity
- 86 GVC
- 87 Habitat for Humanity International, Europe, Middle East and Africa
- 88 Handicap International
- 89 Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR)
- 90 Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights - Poland
- 91 Human Rights Watch
- 92 ICMC Europe
- 93 International Aid Services
- 94 International Association For Refugees
- 95 International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
- 96 International Rescue Committee
- 97 International Young Naturefriends - IYNF
- 98 INTERSOS
- 99 IPSIA
- 100 Islamic Relief UK

- 101 JRS
- 102 JRS Belgium
- 103 KISA - Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism
- 104 Kopin
- 105 La Strada International
- 106 Lafede.cat- Federació catalana
- 107 Latin American Wome's Rights Service (LAWRS) - UK
- 108 Latvian Human Rights Committee (LHRC)
- 109 Le Monde des Possibles ASBL
- 110 Legambiente
- 111 LIDU - Lega italiana dei Diritti dell'Uomo
- 112 Ligue des Droits de l'homme en Belgique (LDH)
- 113 Ligue suisse des droits de l'homme (LSDH)
- 114 Link2007 – Cooperazione in rete
- 115 LVIA
- 116 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
- 117 MANI TESE
- 118 Marche solidali – coordinamento organizzazioni marchigiane di cooperazione e solidarietà internazionale
- 119 Médecins du Monde
- 120 Menedek - Hungarian Association for Migrants
- 121 Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- 122 Migrant Voice - UK
- 123 Migrants' Rights Network
- 124 Missing Children Europe
- 125 Movimento Shalom onlus
- 126 Naga
- 127 Nasc, the Irish Immigrant Support Centre
- 128 Norwegian Centre against Racism
- 129 One Third Sweden
- 130 ONG para el Desarrollo
- 131 Osservatorio AIDS
- 132 Overseas
- 133 Oxfam
- 134 Pax for Peace
- 135 PICUM
- 136 Platform Kinderen op de vlucht – Plate-forme Mineurs en exil
- 137 Polish Migration Forum
- 138 Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law (PSAL)
- 139 PRO ASYL
- 140 PRO.DO.C.S.
- 141 ProgettoMondo Mlal
- 142 Rainbow for Africa

- 143 Red Acoge
- 144 Save the Children
- 145 Secours Islamique France
- 146 SKOP - The National Platform of Maltese Development NGOs
- 147 SONIA per un Mondo Nuovo e Giusto
- 148 SPARK15
- 149 stichting LOS (National Support Organisation for the Undocumented)
- 150 Stichting Vluchteling
- 151 Swedish Refugee Advice Centre
- 152 Terra Nuova
- 153 Terre des Hommes
- 154 The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU Kehys
- 155 The Migrants' Rights Network
- 156 Trócaire
- 157 U.V.I.S.P.-ASSISI
- 158 United Protestant Church in Belgium
- 159 Welthungerhilfe
- 160 WeWorld
- 161 with the support of CONCORD Europe
- 162 World Vision