Terre des Hommes: The EU’s scandalous response - The gates of Fortress Europe remain barred to Human Rights

*Terre des Hommes condemns the short-sightedness and hypocrisy with which the heads of state of the European Union have decided to deal with the humanitarian emergency unfolding before our eyes.*

*The decisions taken during the Summit of yesterday do not respond in the slightest to Terre des Hommes demand to address the phenomenon with a broad, forward-looking and solution-oriented vision.*

Terre des Hommes denounces that:

1. The saving of human lives in the Mediterranean has not been recognized as a top priority although President Donald Tusk had announced that before the European Summit.

2. The request to set up a search and rescue operation at European level, committing all 28 EU member states to invest in boats and rescue vehicles has not been met. The argued lack of resources cannot be reiterated as they are now spent in favour of an operation that will still have the primary mandate to patrol, and with a limited rescue capacity. No reference whatsoever is made to an extension of the mandate and outreach of the operations.

3. Priority is given to the fight against human trafficking and smuggling, taking these phenomena deliberately out of the context of global instability and the lack of protection mechanisms in countries of escape which are their prime causes.

4. The key measures for the combat against trafficking are identified as capture, destruction and sinking of vessels used by the traffickers, operations that put the lives and safety of those on board at high risks.

5. The construction of a network of protection for asylum seekers in the countries of escape, through the provision of EU Embassies and Consulates EU therein as well as in refugee camps, places where it would be of prime importance to establish an opportunity to express the request for protection, has not even been mentioned.

6. No decision regarding humanitarian corridors enabling to reach Europe without crossing the Mediterranean Sea through unsafe and full or risks journeys was taken. Such dangerous journey will continue being operated by smugglers as long as the demands to cross the Sea will be the only option and hope of life for migrants.
7. Full silence on the design of an immediate contingency and reception plan from the EU which would allow equal and uniform distribution of quotas of migrants reception. Such plan would have enabled an immediate possibility for migrants to benefit from protected location in our continent. No agreement was pronounced among 28 EU Member States to define such plan.

8. No reference to revising the Dublin Treaty was made.

**If Europe seeks to tackle trafficking and smuggling of persons, why does it not courageously tackle the root causes which feed such shaming offence?**

Contacts for interviews

**Raffaele Salinari**, Chair Terre des Hommes International Federation, (English, Italian, Spanish, French) Mobile : +39.320.225.3773 raffaelesalinari@yahoo.it

**Federica Giannotta**, Terre des Hommes Italy, Faro Project Manager (English, Italian, Spanish) Mobile: +39.347.16.0455 f.giannotta@tdhitaly.org

**Salvatore Parata**, Head European Office, Terre des Hommes International Federation (English, Italian, Spanish, French) Mobile: +32.474.209921 paratas@terredeshommes.org

Press Dossier

Know more on **FARO Project**, a project to provide support for unaccompanied minors in Sicily [http://destination-unknown.org/italy-faro-i-and-ii-projects-in-lampedusa](http://destination-unknown.org/italy-faro-i-and-ii-projects-in-lampedusa)

Know more on **Destination Unknown Campaign** to protect children on the move [www.destination-unknown.org](http://www.destination-unknown.org)

Know more on **Terre des Hommes Italy** [www.terredeshommes.it](http://www.terredeshommes.it)

Know more on **Terre des Hommes International Federation** [www.terredeshommes.org](http://www.terredeshommes.org)

**Terre des Hommes operations in Sicily**

Terre des Hommes provides psycho-social and psychological care to foreign unaccompanied minors in Sicily, hosted in reception centres for unaccompanied minors (CPSA-Centri di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza) “Papa Francesco” in Priolo Gargallo and “La Zagara” Città Giardino in Melilli (Syracuse Province), and “Villa Motevago” in Caltagirone (Catania Province). Average total of 120 children benefits from Terre des Hommes services. Such work is framed in the FARO Project initiated in 2011. FARO project is part of the Destination Unknown Campaign led by Terre des Hommes International Federation to protect children on the move.

Terre des Hommes activities to protect foreign unaccompanied minors in Italy are entirely funded by private funding. FARO project activities are supported by several
Terre des Hommes organisations. Main external donors are: Foundation d’Harcourt, Foundation Prosolidar, Foundation Zanetti and C&A textile company.

**Destination Unknown Campaign to protect children on the move**

Destination Unknown campaign was launched in 2012 to raise awareness about violation of the rights of unaccompanied minors - children on the move - who are fleeing war, poverty and violence. According to the most recent data, children on age to move who cross border are nearly 35 million worldwide (source: UN). The Campaign aims at enhancing adequate policy for effective protection and to provide concrete actions for these children, particularly those vulnerable to abuse, violence, exploitation and discrimination. The Destination Unknown Campaign is present with access to migrant children throughout the Mediterranean with field project to support migrant children in Sicily (Terre des Hommes), Malta (KOPIN), Greece (ARSIS), Cyprus (Hope for Children Cyprus), Lebanon (INSAN), Egypt (Terre des Hommes), in addition to operational and advocacy work in Europe, in the Middle East and at global level.

**Terre des Hommes International Federation**

The Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF) is a network of 10 national organizations working for the rights of children and to promote equitable development without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination.

To this end, TDH supports and implements 840 development and humanitarian aid projects in 68 countries designed to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged children, of their families and communities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the conceptual framework guiding the activities of TDH.