Press Release
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New EU Agenda on Migration.
Why thousands of migrants deaths are needed to propose a European Migration policy?

The European Commission will propose a new EU Agenda on Migration on May 13th. Since the “Lampedusa tragedy” in 2013, Terre des Hommes has been reiterating that migrants tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea were not “an emergency”, but will continue to occur on a regular basis as a result of an irresponsible security-based European migration policy. Among those who lose their life at Sea there are children, pregnant women and babies.

At last, some faltering steps of a European responsible policy on migration
The European Commission is about to formally adopt its new EU Agenda on Migration on the 13th of May 2015. The milestones of the Agenda was presented yesterday by the EU High representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to the UN Security Council, in order to get a UN mandate to operate security operations in the Mediterranean Sea. “The problem of migrants in the Mediterranean is not only a humanitarian issue, but a security problem, Mogherini said. Migrants and refugees will not be sent back. I want to be clear on this. The Geneva Convention will be fully respected” she underlined.

The proposed EU Agenda on Migration will then be submitted to the next European Council in June. The European Commission may have come up – finally – with a text that proposes minimum, yet important, progress on crucial measures that Terre des Hommes has been advocating for years now. These include the opening of legal channels for migrants to enter Europe safely, restart serious operations to save lives at Sea or the yet lacking binding system of quotas for migrants throughout the EU 28 EU (also better known as a “burden sharing” system). Terre des Hommes would like to see also countries like Switzerland or Norway to be part of such system. “On the burden sharing system, we expect again an opposition between two blocks of European Member States”, admitted Salvatore Parata, Head of European office at Terre des Hommes International Federation, and this cannot not be done without a revision of the Dublin Asylum System anyhow, he concluded.

Dublin Asylum System must be revised
Terre des Hommes calls on again European Heads of States and Governments to understand this is a European responsibility, and not the sole duty of external border countries like Italy, nor the one of few countries like Germany or Sweden that already host higher proportion of migrants than to other countries in Europe. We also
consider that the proposed system of “binding burden sharing” proposed by the European Commission cannot be coherently applied without the overcoming and revision of the current Dublin Asylum system. As far as the EU keeps on applying Dublin, the burden of asylum applications procedures will stay with the frontline countries whereas this must also be implemented by all European countries whatever the first arrival country is.

Specialized in providing protection and psycho-social care to unaccompanied migrant children, Terre des Hommes will have a close look at the upcoming EU Agenda on Migration’s measures related to children, if any, and will continue to demand for a specific set of measures tackling the vulnerability of children and youth, as they represent an important part of survivors arriving at European borders and applying for asylum in Europe in general.

As an NGO operating in Sicily, Terre des Hommes continues promoting a resourced a coordinated, rapid and dignified resettlement system of children and youth across Europe. “One of our major worry today is the increasing number of children and youth escaping from our first temporary reception centres in South Italy” said Federica Giannotta, Terre des Hommes Project Manager in Sicily. “They escape to reach another European destination, but also because they simply do not get access to their right to asylum in the country where they want to stay for their future life, and they do not receive the adequate care they need once they arrive here” Giannotta concluded.

**A child-focused Agenda on Migration**

Terre des Hommes calls for an adapted and child-focused EU migration and mobility policy, including protection measures from the very first arrival of the child until a long-term solution, based on the best interests of the child is found. Increased measures of child protection in countries of origin should also be supported as integral part of this strategy. Moreover, though the EU Agenda on Migration will focus mainly on international cross-border migration towards Europe, Terre des Hommes continues to call for enhanced protection of European children on the move within the EU. European children moving within the EU are at risk of exploitation and abuse, they experience discrimination on the basis of their origin and at large denied their right to be (adequately) protected in practice.

**Linking Migration and Development**

Terre des Hommes considers that a new EU Agenda on Migration cannot be limited to respond to migration “crises” or a strict security and border control logic. The EU must address the root causes of such migration, war, violence, human rights violations and permanent instability in Africa and Middle East. The EU must review both its Neighbourhood policy (process ongoing) but also its Development Cooperation Agenda towards more investment in inclusive development, decent work, social protection and human rights in countries of origin of migrants. In brief,
the EU must move from a pure security and border control logic towards a long term strategy for sustainable local development and poverty eradication, and better link its Development & Migration Agenda.

In Europe, the EU must develop serious social protection and integration policies for children and youth in our European societies. “The burden sharing system must go with a revision of the Dublin System. If implemented, this will therefore be a “test” for our overall inclusive and peaceful European construction. A test on the EU capacity to fight against xenophobia and racism in Europe, concluded Raffaele Salinari, Chair of Terre des Hommes International Federation.

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Few data on migrant children in Europe
5000 migrants per week will disembark on the sole costs of Sicily until September 2015, according to an official projection from the Italian Government. The lowest estimates available report that 1700 migrants lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea since the beginning of 2015. In 2014, among the total number of undocumented migrants who arrived in Europe, 15% were children (Frontex, 2014), and 25% of the total number of asylum applications in Europe were filed by children.

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Press Dossier

Know more on Terre des Hommes operations in Italy/Sicily FARO Project, a project to provide support for unaccompanied minors in Sicily 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

To know more on European Children moving within the EU: http://destination-unknown.org/european-children-on-the-move-in-europe-are-not-adequately-protected/

Know more on Terre des Hommes Italy: www.terredeshommes.it

Know more on Terre des Hommes International Federation
www.terredeshommes.org

Destination Unknown Campaign
a global campaign to protect children on the move

With Destination Unknown, a global campaign led by Terre des Hommes, we protect children on the move, including unaccompanied and refugee children, through field projects dedicated to the reception, protection, psychosocial and legal support of children.

In the Euro-Mediterranean region, Destination Unknown Campaign is active with direct access to migrant children throughout field operations in Sicily (Terre des Hommes), Malta (KOPIN), Greece (ARSIS), Cyprus (Hope for Children Cyprus), Central and South-East Europe, Lebanon (INSAN), Egypt (Terre des Hommes) and the Middle East.

Destination Unknown campaign was launched in 2012 to raise awareness about violation of the rights of children on the move – including unaccompanied minors - who are fleeing war, poverty and violence. According to the most recent data, children on the move who cross borders are nearly 35 million worldwide (source: UN).

The Campaign also advocates for adequate policy changes enabling effective protection measures and to provide concrete solutions for these children who left their home, particularly those vulnerable to abuse, violence, exploitation and discrimination.