



Brussels, 23rd April 2015

To the kind attention of the Heads of State and Government,

The tragedies that are happening, unabated, in the Mediterranean Sea, with their heavy death toll, compel the Member States' governments to go beyond shock, grief and mere words on solidarity.

The important fact that you decided to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council demonstrates to us that a new consciousness is rising, one that fully understands the reality of the dramatic events affecting the South of Europe.

The goal for the European Union must be to translate this new awareness into political commitments and practical actions; to live up to the humanitarian challenge it is facing due to the migratory flows.

We know all too well that recent events are a result of unresolved conflicts in Syria, the Horn of Africa, Libya and other regions, and that any action aimed at addressing the issue of migration can in no way be separated from the urgency of addressing and solving these conflicts.

However, immediate action is needed today to properly respond, with a new humanitarian spirit, to what is happening in the Mediterranean.

First, we reiterate the urgency of setting up and enlarging search and rescue operations coordinated at EU-level. These should be supported by adequate tools and financial resources provided by the Member States, with the purpose of saving the lives of migrants in distress in the Mediterranean Sea.



In addition, we have to create and increase the use of safe and legal avenues to the EU for people in need of protection, such as humanitarian visas or resettlement. In this context, the Council of Ministers should trigger the temporary protection directive of 2001, allowing for Europe to create safe access for special groups of migrants particularly in need of protection.

Furthermore, we need to create an emergency relocation mechanism. Serious consideration should also be given to revising “Dublin III”, as stated, for example, in the recent report on Human Rights – approved in the Plenary Session – and the creation of new rules for the fair distribution of asylum seekers and refugees between the Member States in order to ensure a more coordinated European governance of immigration and asylum.

Finally, we need to develop joint actions, in close cooperation with the relevant agencies, against criminal networks of migrant-traffickers, in order to prevent them earning money by putting the migrants life at risk.

Dear Heads of State and Government we are confident that the decisions you will take today will meet the challenge posed by the unprecedented events Europe is witnessing and experiencing.

We are aware that the economic and financial crisis makes it difficult for the public to understand fully the migration phenomenon, but we also know it to be the task of European leaders to have a long term vision.

Rebuilding the rationale for renewed solidarity and a new humanity is the task of all.

Indifference to the fate of people, as well as an inability to respond to the difficult conditions of civilian refugees, have in the past been the spark for racism and appalling tragedies.



You have a great responsibility: to bring to life, in this humanitarian emergency, our shared European values and make sure that Europe is not detached from the suffering of its citizens and of the large numbers of refugees and migrants arriving on European shores hoping for a dignified life.

We wish you a fruitful day of work.

Yours faithfully,

Patrizia Toia, Head of the S&D Italian Delegation

Birgit Sippel, S&D-Coordinator to the LIBE-Committee

Antonio Panzeri, Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union