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## **Right of Asylum: 103 million refugees across the world. Over 296,000 in Italy, including 171,000 Ukrainians**

Over 103 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, an unprecedented high of 1 in 77, twice as many as 10 years ago (1 in 167). In 2022, Europe granted temporary protection to more than 4.4 million Ukrainian refugees, without impinging security or welfare. A total of 10 million refugees from Ukraine entered the four neighbouring Member States, while 6.3 million refugees returned on a fairly stable basis. The year 2022, however, also saw the EU "do everything in its power to prevent a few tens of thousands of refugees in need of protection arriving from other routes and other countries from crossing its borders." It occurred in Greece and all the way to the Balkans, from Libya to the border with Belarus, from the Spanish enclaves on the African shores to the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean on the route to the Canary Islands, and finally, the latest 'novelty' of the year, on the docks of Italian ports. This is a "harmful double standard" in matters of asylum. It is "supportive of people from Ukraine but discriminates against and violates human rights and international conventions when it comes to refugees from other countries" - denounces the Migrantes Foundation's 2022 Report on the Right of Asylum, edited by Mariacristina Molfetta and Chiara Marchetti, presented at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University today.

**IL DIRITTO  
D'ASILO**  
REPORT 2022

Costruire il futuro  
con i migranti  
e i rifugiati



"For some refugees, national borders are open, while others cannot even access the ports after a shipwreck," the authors write. "The right of asylum and the very health of our democracies are at risk. This backdrop of severe discrimination, both at international and national level, raises some painful questions: are all children really the same? Do they all enjoy the same rights? Aren't people fleeing from armed conflicts and wars who have lost their homes and their loved ones equal to everyone else, and don't they all have the same rights? It raises the provocative question of whether, in order to be granted these rights, one has to be either blonde or Christian or arrive from the European continent..." **EU: 228,240 "irregular" migrants, 1,800 deaths in the Mediterranean Sea.** As many as 228 240 irregular migrants have entered the EU's external borders in the first nine months of 2022. By the end of October 2022, an estimated (minimum) of 1,800 migrants died and were missing at sea, including at least 1,295 dead and missing along the Central Mediterranean route. The year 2021 also saw a dramatic increase in the number of dead and missing persons travelling along the life-threatening western Atlantic route to the Canary Islands: up 28% from an estimated 877 victims in 2020 to 1,126 in 2021. In the last few years EU Member States recorded a sharp rise in the number of "irregular" crossings of their external borders via the Western Balkans: up from 5,900 in 2018 to 106,400 in the first nine months of 2022, with many such attempts made by individuals. No fewer than 252 refugees and migrants lost their lives in operations carried out by European authorities and reported by survivors as illegal pushbacks between 2021 and October 2022, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The number of "irregular" migrants on the four land borders with Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland and France is increasing everywhere: more than 4,800 were identified by the border police of Trieste and Gorizia alone by mid-September 2022, up 12% compared to the same period in 2021.

A total of 27,301 people were pushed back from the French border into Italy in 2022.

**As many as 32,400 people sent back to Libya.** The year 2021 saw a record-breaking number of migrants and refugees intercepted by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard and sent back ("or rather deported", the Report points out) to an organized system of misery, arbitrariness, harassment, coercion and violence: as many as 32,400 persons, as opposed to 11,900 in 2020. Since 2017, when the Italy-Libya Memorandum of Understanding was signed, a total of 104,500 people have been "deported from Libya", 118,000 since 2016. **EU: 29% more asylum applications in 2021.** Approximately 537,000 people applied for asylum in the European Union for the first time in 2021: a 29% increase compared to 2020. As many as 365 thousand asylum seekers applied in the first six months of 2022, as opposed to 201 thousand in the same period of 2021. The year 2021 saw

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a drop in successful applications (202 thousand compared to 212 thousand in 2020), with a reception rate of 38.5%, compared to 40.7% the previous year.

**Syria ( approximately 99 thousand asylum seekers in 2021) and Afghanistan (85 thousand)** represent the leading nationalities of persons seeking protection in the EU in 2021, followed by Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Venezuela, Somalia, Morocco and Colombia. Arrivals by sea in 2022 saw an increase in the number of people arriving from Afghanistan and Syria, although migrants arriving by sea were mainly Tunisian, Egyptian and Bangladeshi, as in 2021. **There are almost 296,000 refugees living in Italy (June '22), including 171,000 Ukrainian refugees (September '22):** a figure that corresponds to

5 people per 1,000 inhabitants.

There were 613,000 refugees in France and 2,235,000 in Germany as of that same date. "This prompts the question as to who should be taking in migrants from whom, for the sake of keeping up with the ongoing debate in the EU," reads the Migrants Report. "Rather, it would be advisable to discuss the fact that migrants arriving on our shores, unlike many others seeking protection in continental Europe, must first be rescued from a dangerous sea with rescue missions worthy of the name and should be spared the Libyan hell. Unquestionably, this is an issue that Italy cannot handle alone." **103,161 in Italy's reception system.** By the end of October 2022, 103,161 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants were registered in Italy's reception system. However, the rate of successful applications varies greatly depending on the citizenship of origin: in 2022, it went from 8% for Tunisians to 95% for Afghans and 94% for Ukrainians. The percentages for the top three nationalities are very low: Pakistan 34%, Bangladesh 20.5% and Nigeria 41%. **There were 18,801 unaccompanied foreign minors** "present and registered" in Italy at the end of September 2022: they totalled 9,661 in the same period a year ago (a 94% increase). In 2022 the majority arrived from Ukraine (6,000, almost half of the total), followed by Egypt ( approximately 1,600), Afghanistan, Tunisia, Albania, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kosovo. The percentage of recognition of the right of asylum for minors is much higher: almost 74% in 2022, as opposed to 45% altogether. Fifty per cent of all unaccompanied foreign minors are Afghans. **NGOs and migrants rescued at sea.** NGOs rescued persons shipwrecked in the Mediterranean Sea with a total of 38 ships and aircraft from 2016 to date. There were 21 as of June 15, 7 of which were operative and could carry out search & rescue (SAR) operations, while 3 were merely carrying out reconnaissance and monitoring activities. Four were stranded in ports as a result of legal prosecution, another 7 were halted for technical reasons. Since 2016, six European countries (Germany, Italy, Greece, Malta, the Netherlands and Spain) have filed 60 prosecutions. But only 2 new court cases were brought in Italy as of December 2021, on top of the 8 legal proceedings lodged that year. Reasons include technical irregularities, equipment malfunction, an excessive number of passengers and the presence of too many life jackets on board (sic).

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