
Council of Europe: rebuke to Italy about NGOs and sea rescues.

“Consider withdrawing or revising Decree Law no. 1/2023”

In a [letter](#) addressed to the Italian Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, as revealed in a release issued in Strasbourg earlier today, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Dunja Mijatović, calls the Government “to consider withdrawing or revising Decree Law no. 1/2023” (which concerns the code of conduct for NGOs). The terms of such Decree could, according to the representative of the Council of Europe, “hinder the search and rescue operations of NGOs and therefore be in conflict with Italy’s obligations under human rights and international law”. In addition, the Commissioner – in a written notice – points out that “in practice, the NGOs’ ships have been assigned distant, safe places to disembark people rescued at sea, such as ports in Central and Northern Italy”. “The decree and the practice of assigning distant ports for the disembarkation of people rescued at sea risk depriving people in need of life-saving assistance from NGOs on the deadliest migratory route in the Mediterranean”, writes the Commissioner. Furthermore, the Commissioner reiterates the call on the Italian authorities to suspend cooperation with the Libyan government on interceptions at sea”, as stated in the “Recommendation on Central Mediterranean”. Finally, the Commissioner for Human Rights asks for further information “about alleged repatriations of people from Italy to Greece on private ships, where they seem to have been deprived of freedom in worrying conditions”. Based on the Recommendation to put an end to refoulements in Europe, the Commissioner recalls that “assessing the need for protection of every single person who reaches the borders remains a fundamental way to protect from refoulement”.

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