
World Refugee Day: Mijatovic (Council of Europe), “serious human rights violations against refugees”

“I am struck by the alarming level of tolerance to serious human rights violations against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that has developed across Europe”, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, said from Lampedusa today, ahead of World Refugee Day on 20 June. “Last week’s shipwreck off the Greek coast is yet another reminder that, despite many warnings, the lives of people at sea remain at risk in the face of insufficient rescue capacity and coordination, a lack of safe and legal routes and solidarity, and the criminalisation of NGOs trying to provide life-saving assistance”, she added. Also, “elsewhere in Europe, pushbacks at land and sea borders”, and “violence against refugees and migrants” are “widely documented”. According to the Commissioner, Council of Europe member states’ governments “have far too often silently tolerated or openly supported the adoption of laws and policies that have progressively stripped human rights protections from people on the move”. Last month, leaders of member states recommitted to the values of the Council of Europe, and to the European Convention on Human Rights in particular. “As we mark World Refugee Day, I therefore call on Council of Europe member states to stand by their promise – not in words, but in actions”.

Valentina Bombelli