
Migration: Mijatovic (Council of Europe) from Lampedusa, “Italy must stop endangering the lives and safety of refugees”

“It is high time to take collective action to end the loss of life at sea, including through responsibility sharing for adequate rescue capacity and relocation of those rescued”: this is what Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, said during her visit in Italy. From Lampedusa, where she visited the refugee camp and the cemetery and met some NGOs working for refugees, she spoke harsh words: “Italy must stop endangering the lives and safety of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants by facilitating their interception and return to Libya, where they face widespread and grave violations of human rights”. She reminded the Italian authorities that cooperation with third countries, “including Tunisia”, cannot do without “comprehensive and effective human rights safeguards” and asked them to repeal the regulations and stop the procedures that prevent NGOs’ search and rescue operations at sea. “The criminalisation of their activities goes against Italy’s obligations under international law”. Mijatović asked for “long-term planning at national level to ensure the sustainability of reception of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in dignified conditions”, but she also said that “tailored support should be provided to the authorities and inhabitants of Lampedusa, who continue to extend generous assistance to those arriving to the island, despite all difficulties”.

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