



# JUSTICIA Y PAZ

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## **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER? A call for Justice and Peace towards fraternal responsibility**

*Justice and Peace considerations about the deaths of irregular immigrants who try to reach the European Union*

“Who is responsible for the blood of these brothers? Nobody. We all answer: it was not me; I have nothing to do with it; others may be responsible, but not me. Today nobody feels guilty for it; we have lost the consciousness of fraternal responsibility” (One of Pope Francis’s statements in his trip to Lampedusa).

The month of October will be remembered as of one of the most tragic months in recent history of migrations towards the European Union. Due to their extreme seriousness, the events in Lampedusa and Malta have forced national and European policymakers to look back and discover the “collateral” effects of the migration policies they designed and the repressive and rejecting nature of these policies that condemn millions of children, men and women to bury their future.

From Peace and Justice of Spain we would like to express our sadness and sorrow for the terrible loss of human lives in the transit towards Europe, as well as our solidarity with all the victims of the illegal trafficking of human beings.

Neither the good words of Durao Barroso (President of the European Commission) and Cecilia Malmstrom (commissioner for Domestic Policy) in their recent visit to the island of Lampedusa, answered by the population with shouts of “Shame”, nor the predictable results of the Brussels European Council, celebrated the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of October, have shown any real willingness to introduce changes in the course of the European policy on migration. On the contrary, there has been talked about utmost surveillance, to cooperate with UNHCR and the International Organization of Migration, to collaborate with countries of origin and transit of migrants and to fight against human trafficking, which does not mean anything new regarding what has already been said.

We believe that the migration policy that the European Union has been developing since it has responsibility in this domain is unfair, unsupportive and unacceptable. This policy has contributed to emphasize the differences between the citizens of the Union and the nationals of third countries, hindering the processes of integration. It has increased the repressive control in the land and sea borders and has ignored the several violations committed in the countries in transit against immigrants that tried to reach the European Union or that were rejected at the border.

In this regard, we believe it is necessary, just like it has been highlighted by the European Parliament in its recent resolution the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October that “the European Union should develop a more global strategy in the Mediterranean which should place labour migration in the context of social, economic and political development of its neighbourhood”. Therefore, we believe that more

realistic and efficient ways should be offered for the legal entry in European countries, that it is “preferable to an irregular entry which entails the risk of human trafficking and the loss of lives”.

Likewise, in our opinion, it is urgent that European Union countries examine in depth their asylum policies in order to guarantee the access to asylum of the Union in a fair, efficient and safe way under co-responsibility of all the member states.

Also, it is needed the elimination of all the rules and administrative practices that penalize those who help endangered migrants, and all those laws and practices of abusive detentions of immigrants that are contrary to human rights and the guarantees of the state governed by the Rule of Law.

In addition, we consider unavoidable a greater and deeper commitment of the European countries in favour of humanitarian assistance and of development cooperation, in Africa and the Middle East, which would favour peace and democracy, addressing this way the causes of emigration.

Definitely, we promote -in line with Pope Francis- the recovery of the sense of fraternal responsibility between peoples and nations. A fraternity for removing the structures of injustice and selfishness which generate the unbearable shortages and inequalities presents in the origin of massive migratory phenomena towards Europe. We can only say that this fraternity will come true when those who desperately come to us can say, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Madrid, 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2013