

The Future of Europe at Stake in the Mediterranean Region

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The coming months will be decisive to the future of Europe. If the European Union Member States do not put an end to their disagreements and find a means to regulate the inflow of migrants and asylum seekers, the EU project could be shaken forever.

A real short, medium and long-term strategy is required. First of all, departures from countries of transit and the African seaboard must be stopped, allowing only those who are truly eligible for asylum to reach Europe. After this, asylum-seekers should be distributed among the European countries according to an automatic, obligatory mechanism.

Departures must be stopped and people smugglers must be prevented from continuing their deadly traffic, which is making the Mediterranean an immense cemetery. Those who truly need asylum cannot be left at the mercy of traffickers without scruples. Obstructing departures also means ending the accumulation of profits by these merchants of men, women and children.

Let us take example from the agreement made with Turkey, which has allowed the Balkans route to be closed.

Six Billion Euros for the Mediterranean

The European Union must invest at least 6 billion euros to block the access routes across the Mediterranean. Based on EU-Niger cooperation, we

must collaborate more with countries of transit, namely Mauritania, Mali, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. Before 2016, some 150,000 migrants were passing through Niger every year. By 2018, there were no more than 5,000. I travelled to Niger this past 18 July to step up our cooperation. On the political level, but also on the economic front. A significant delegation of European businesses accompanied me to strengthen ties between Europe and this region and contribute financial means to the private sector.

Reforming the Dublin System

In 2017, three fifths of asylum requests in Europe were made in only three countries: Germany, Italy and France. This injustice is connected to the Dublin Regulation, which is causing increasing tension among EU Member States.

We must adapt it to create a more effective European asylum system. In November 2017, the European Parliament already adopted a proposal for equitable distribution of asylum seekers. This text is a stepping stone for reform.

Without European strategy, the motto of everyone for themselves will prevail and it will be the end of the Schengen Area.

Taking Action for Libya

The EU must coordinate its action in Libya. I travelled there in early July to provide the European Parliament's support to the stabilization process, which, in particular, involves organizing dem-

ocratic elections as quickly as possible. We are ready to provide resources and skills to ensure these important elections run smoothly.

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Next October, the European Parliament will host all parties interested in the organization and proper functioning of these elections. But we will also discuss security, economic stabilization and the reconstruction of a viable health system.

An Ambitious Marshall Plan for Africa

An effective global strategy should also deal with the deep-seated causes of these exoduses. By 2050, the population of Africa will have doubled. Unless we take action, the hundreds of thousands

of migrants knocking at our doors today will become millions.

The instability in vast regions of Africa and the Middle East is behind this inflow, as are terrorism, poverty, famine and climate change. This is why, at the European Parliament, we are demanding a Marshall Plan for Africa. We will need at least 40 billion euros to mobilize 500 billion in investments. The aim is to open up perspectives and raise employment for young Africans in their countries, allowing them to regain hope.

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The European Parliament proposes an intelligent, credible strategy. We must set aside national egoism and act together to rebuild the Mediterranean, the crucible of our civilizations, the essential link between Europe, the Maghreb and Africa.