



Strasbourg, 30 July 2015

Statement of ALDA about migration and necessity of humanitarian assistance

MORE INTEGRATED ACTIONS AND NOT THE WALLS NEEDED FOR THE EUROPEAN AGENDAS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ON MIGRATION

The European Union is witnessing perhaps the largest scale of immigration wave ever with some 153,000 migrants who have been detected at its external borders since the beginning of this year and arriving at its “gates” in south Italy and as of recently at the Hungary’s border with Serbia. One of the biggest surges happened at the beginning of June when nearly 6000 people were plucked from the sea at the south Italy’s coast, while at the other gate - some 80,000 refugees and migrants have reached Hungary since the beginning of this year.

Facing the global phenomenon of mass migration which, according to recent estimations has become larger in scope and numbers than the one happened after the World War II, the DG Migration and Home Affairs has launched a scope of comprehensive policy measures granting institutional responses and even more calling for adequate responses by the MS mostly affected by the influx of migrants. However, the main challenge in facing the phenomenon still remains unresolved, in other words how to protect the migrants’ lives and the rights of asylum seekers on one hand, and the security of the EU external borders on the other. On their long and exhausting escape from civil war, despair, famine and misery they are using dangerous routes, risking kidnapping, human trafficking, robbery, jail and even death. At the end of the day, only those who have enough money to pay the traffickers, those patient enough to try to cross the border several times or those who are lenient enough to endure lack of any decent living conditions along the way, and in border areas in particular, can consider themselves as “lucky asylum seekers” in the EU.

alda@aldaintranet.org - www.alda-europe.eu

HEADQUARTERS IN STRASBOURG
c/o Council of Europe, office 1027
Avenue de l'Europe, 67075 Strasbourg, (FR)
Tel +33 (0) 390214593
Fax +33 (0) 388412751
aldastrasbourg@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN BRUSSELS
Rue de la Science, 14b
1000 Brussels (BE)
Tel: +32 2 880 37 28
aldabrussels@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN VICENZA
Viale Milano 66
36100 Vicenza, (IT)
Tel +39 0444540 146
Fax +39 0444 231043
aldavicenza@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN SKOPJE
Bld. Partizanski Odredi 15A 2/2
1000 Skopje, (MK)
Tel +389 (0) 2 6091 060

OFFICE IN SUBOTICA
c/o LDA Subotica
Trg cara Jovana Nenada 15
24000 Subotica, (SRB)
Tel/Fax +381 24 554587



The most recent decision by the Hungarian government to build a 175 km long and 4 meter high barbed wire fence along the borderline with Serbia could lead to another humanitarian catastrophe similar to those we have already witnessed earlier this year near Lampedusa, now extending to other local communities such as Subotica, Kanjiza, Backi Vinogradi – municipalities in Serbia along the borderline with Hungary. Once again, responding to the global mass migration crisis with physical barriers or the new walls to replace the old ones seems more as a lesson not learnt from the past. Once again, it has become evident that phenomenon of global migration requires comprehensive, multi-stakeholder, internationally and regionally well -coordinated measures, but it is the local communities where the migrants need humanitarian assistance provision.

- ✚ The European Association for Local Democracy ALDA therefore calls for immediate actions guaranteeing adequate humanitarian aid, psychological and counselling support in the host communities along the EU external borderline.
- ✚ We strongly urge for coordinated actions by the government institutions, Red Cross and other civil society organisations in ensuring migrants have access to healthcare, medical and sanitation services in both transit and host countries
- ✚ We support the ten points [Action plan on migration by the European Commission](#), while in particular the urgent and immediate need to fight against the organised crime of the human trafficking and smuggling
- ✚ It is of utmost importance for local authorities in municipalities in border areas with the EU and Western Balkan countries such as FYROM and Serbia recently affected by huge influx of migrants and asylum seekers to be equipped with adequate human and technical resources and facilities to provide shelter, necessary humanitarian aid and health care.
- ✚ We strongly believe that the concept of the European integration based on shared values and standards has been proven resilient through difficult times and crisis and that building new walls is unnecessary waste of taxpayers' money, and even more we are confident that a 175 km long wall is not a remedy to “keep

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c/o Council of Europe, office 1027
Avenue de l'Europe, 67075 Strasbourg, (FR)
Tel +33 (0) 390214593
Fax +33 (0) 388412751
aldastrasbourg@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN BRUSSELS
Rue de la Science, 14b
1000 Brussels (BE)
Tel: +32 2 880 37 28
aldabrussels@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN VICENZA
Viale Milano 66
36100 Vicenza, (IT)
Tel +39 0444540 146
Fax +39 0444 231043
aldavicenza@aldaintranet.org

OFFICE IN SKOPJE
Bld. Partizanski Odredi 15A 2/2
1000 Skopje, (MK)
Tel +389 (0) 2 6091 060

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24000 Subotica, (SRB)
Tel/Fax +381 24 554587



the Europe's civilisation”.

- ✚ ALDA is fully committed to promoting a culture of respect for human rights and dignity, tolerance and non-violence and also aware of the need for enhanced CSOs and LAs actions to raise awareness and educate for the European citizenship without discrimination or prejudice.
- ✚ Being aware of the present situation and the prospects for increased waves of migrants and asylum seekers heading towards Europe, we are of the opinion that both immediate actions are needed to prevent losses of migrants' lives at sea and at inland, while in the long run we plead for a strengthened common asylum policy based on solidarity among the EU MS.
- ✚ **With its co-operation programmes ALDA is effectively contributing to 2015** the European year for Development through actions aimed at supporting the Local authorities that can play a bigger role in helping migrants, who can be active partners in development and not a burden on society.
- ✚ Finally, as the European Association for Local Democracy comprising both CSOs and LAs, we call for a consistent implementation, regular upgrade and monitoring of the [European Agenda on Migration](#)

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