



European Elections 2019

solidar

Position Paper 5/6

ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EUROPE

SOLIDAR CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY AND SHOWS THAT
INTEGRATION IS POSSIBLE

In Partnership with:

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FOR AN INCLUSIVE EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICIES

Civil society – concrete solutions against anti-immigrant rhetoric and systematic impasse

The anti-immigrant sentiment fueled by nationalists and populists across Europe has been causing restrictive immigration policies that breed the stigmatization of migrants. The politics of fear is fed by the same hate, racism and xenophobia that it fuels and that is embodied by Orbàn and Salvini shaking hands in the run-up to the European elections and hoping to gather a reactionary majority in the next European Parliament.

The debate ahead of the European elections is providing indeed a dreadful example of low-level and pointless debates. Instead of debating possible solutions for intertwined issues – like migration flows as result of global inequalities, wars and climate change, **migration is considered as a scapegoat** for the worsening socio-economic conditions affecting too many all over Europe.

SOLIDAR firmly stands against any political view based on playing off the vulnerable ones against each other. Together with our members, partners and allies we are fighting back the politics and rhetoric of fear with facts and figures that unveil the nationalists' lies. Indeed, our members' work on the ground shows on a daily basis that the best solutions for all are achieved when the actions undertaken are based on social inclusion and solidarity. Fear never led to improved social conditions.

Civil Society Organisation are the ones providing solutions. CSOs are succeeding where European Institutions and Member States are failing.

SOLIDAR members that work to integrate migrants and refugees in European societies provide concrete examples for the way forward. The current impasse at the institutional level has already put a risks tens of thousands individuals' aspirations to live a peaceful and quiet life out of

war. CSOs are the ones taking care of them. The nationalistic agendas attacking NGOs that rescue migrants at sea by classifying them as a disguised *refoulement* (thus criminal) are hampering social inclusion instead of providing solutions.

Humanitarian Crisis need Humanitarian Solutions

A Humanitarian Emergency The number of **humans** dying or putting their life at risk to seek international protection and get the opportunity to live their life afar from war, climate disasters and hunger gives the magnitude of the human tragedy standing behind each and every migrant's story. Ignoring the humanitarian dimension of migration flows is not only a violation of a basic fundamental right (the right to life) and the international law. It also breaches the founding values of the European project.

European Institutions have been stressing the decrease of migrants arriving to Europe, but they have been failing at mentioning the increasing number of deaths in the Central Mediterranean Route (1839 only in 2018)¹. These dreadful figures are the result of restrictive government policies and the reluctance to adopt shared solutions at the EU level for sake of short-sighted national interests that prioritise borders control. The so-called migration emergency is in fact a humanitarian crisis. And it must be addressed at the EU level. For this reason, it is crucial that the next majority in the European institutions is progressive and willing to overcome national reluctances to achieve common solutions, based on solidarity and bridging with those operating on the ground, like CSOs. SOLIDAR member [Movimento por la Paz](#) (MPDL) in its commitment to the protection of people in situations of social vulnerability, directs its actions to facilitate both its reception and social, legal and health care, and to ensure individual processes that guarantee the rights of migrants in an emergency situation.

Tackling the real drivers of migration and promote third countries development.

1. See UNHCR and IOM, <https://www.iom.int/news/unhcr-and-iom-appeal-european-leaders-tackle-mediterranean-deaths>.

while using migrants as a scapegoat, nationalists and populists fail at tackling the main causes for the undergoing humanitarian crisis. These are climate change, the lack of decent work coupled with demographic trends, climate change, wars and the resulting unstable social contexts behind international migration. It is therefore essential that the drivers of migration are consistently addressed when discussing migration policies.

To overcome the current impasse and deliver solutions to the benefit of all, SOLIDAR DEMANDS

- **The revision of the Dublin Regulation** in line with the European Parliament's report adopted in 2017, it is matter of sharing responsibilities and not leaving the burden on some countries.
- **A Humanitarian response for a Humanitarian Crisis** - on search and rescue operations, we need a strong EU response and a full humanitarian mandate. The EU has to put in place a lawful system to provide open, safe and regular migration channels, such as humanitarian corridors or the facilitation of special VISA requirements in the countries of origins
- **Stop the criminalisation of Solidarity** - as those who want to save human lives in the Mediterranean or support migrants in the countries of arrival are more and more under the threat of legal pursuit.

Medium and Long-term integration is possible through social inclusion of migrants

SOLIDAR is concerned with:

Rule of Law - The denial of fundamental rights, such as the right to health care and education and free and equal access to the labour market, are the core issue that we should address for overcoming the European political impasse on migrants' integration in our society. Any human being should be considered "illegal". Human rights are universal, no matter the migration status of the person. Defining and treating an individual as "illegal" violates the right of a person

entitled of rights to be to be recognised as such before the law.

Concrete integration policies instead of forced returns - Integration policies and programmes determine migrants' opportunities to participate in society on an equal footing by providing them with education opportunities, access to the labour market and social services, the entitlement of civic and political rights. However, instead designing a comprehensive integration strategy and set it as a priority, the EU and its Member States' migration policies have been increasingly focused on border control and return procedures. Young people with a migration background need good language skills to graduate from school and get involved in society. In addition to individual counselling and guidance, the youth migration services SOLIDAR member [Internationaler Bund \(IB\)](#) also offer pupils language and communication courses to improve their language skills. Migrants who are no longer of compulsory school age can attend integration courses especially for young people to learn German as a second language in stepwise progression.

To end speculation on human trafficking and finally deliver solutions based on solidarity, the EU and its Member States have to radically change the current policy-path, and put **Solidarity and Human Rights at the heart of Europe's migration and asylum policy. SOLIDAR thus demands**

Social Investment:

- The EU should reverse the logic of austerity towards investments in adequate provision of quality healthcare, social services and education. Moreover, it is essential to develop instruments that facilitate the recognition of competences and qualifications of migrants to allow them to continue further education and access to the labour market. Therefore, it is key to recognise and promote the work of carried out by civil society organisations active in this field and adequately fund the welfare system. Resources allocated for integrating migrants and refugees are social investment and as such the return of the investment is a safer, fairer, society for all.

- Better accessibility of migrants to vocational training and job opportunities, as well as the recognition of existing skills and qualification for the progress and development of our societies.

Decent Work and Social Protection for All:

- More controls against the exploitation of migrants in the underground and informal economy. Free **affiliation to trade unions** for everybody should be promoted and supported. Since many years SOLIDAR members [CGIL](#), [ARCI](#) and [AUSER](#) playing a leading role migrant workers' associations and civil society through campaigns and civic initiatives. SOLIDAR members always been active in raising awareness of this phenomenon, denouncing cases of exploitation and promoting the approval of a national law to eradicate the problem

Eager to know more? Check out our publications

- [From Europe to local: Migrating solidarity](#)
- [The EU action plan on integration of third country nationals](#)
- [Towards an EU comprehensive strategy for integration of migrants - SOLIDAR Social Progress Watch 2016](#)
- [For a human rights based EU legal migration framework](#)
- [Global Compact on Migration](#)
- [Behind Nationalism](#)
- [Report of the Independent Commission for Sustainable Equality](#)

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SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.



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