

April 25, 2021

Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council

Mr David Maria Sassoli, President of the European Parliament

Dear Presidents,

yet another tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea with the sinking of a rubber dinghy off the coast of Libya and the death of its 130 occupants shocked us not only for the gravity of the incident but even more so because that sinking and those deaths are the result of the failure to the request for help from the boat in difficulty. It seems that 33 hours have passed since the first alarm before a ship (belonging to an NGO) arrived on the scene. Frontex claims to have alerted three countries (Italy, Malta and Libya) without any of them taking action.

So we arrived at the denial of rescue at sea, an act that is contrary not only to the most elementary principles of humanity but also to international laws and conventions. How can our Europe, proud of its civilization and its democracy, despise the most elementary of human rights: that of life?

This tragedy is only the latest in a series of events and facts that must convince us that we can no longer ignore it and that it is time to act. As European citizens, we expect the European Union to give the migration dossier the same importance and the same urgency that, rightly, are attributed to the fight against the pandemic, the related economic crisis and the issue of climate change. In particular, we ask you to commit the Institutions you preside over to:

- Immediately organize an effective rescue system at sea with the contribution (in the appropriate forms) of all European countries
- Immediately remedy the dramatic situations of the refugee camps located near the European borders (in particular those of Lesbos and Lipa) with rehabilitation projects and assistance to the people who live there in inhuman conditions and with a system of incentives / disincentives aimed at to the States involved.
- Finally define a rational and humane European migration policy and activate corridors for the legal and safe arrival of migrants on European territory.

We want to continue to be proud of Europe, our great common home. Words of execration and condolence are useless if they are not transformed into actions. We need to act now.

We thank you for what you will do and wish you good work.

Pietro Barbucci, President of Associazione Sante Malatesta, Pisa <https://santemalatesta.it/>

Maurizio Certini, Director of Centro Internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira, Firenze  
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**YLVA JOHANSSON**  
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Brussels, 9/6/2021

Dear Mr Barbucci,

Dear Mr Certini,

On behalf of President Ursula von der Leyen, I would like to thank you for your letter dated 25 April 2021. Like you, I was shocked and deeply saddened by the tragic incident that occurred on 22 April 2021. Saving life at sea is a moral duty, as well as a legal obligation for Member States under international law.

The coordination of search and rescue operations falls under the remit of national authorities, and there is no operational involvement of the Commission services. We have nevertheless repeatedly called on all actors involved in search and rescue events to comply with their obligations under European and international law and to act in a concerted manner. The Commission is strongly committed to protecting the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees.

I presented a new Pact on Migration and Asylum on 23 September 2020, which includes a Recommendation for a more structured cooperation among Member States and other relevant stakeholders regarding search and rescue at sea. A European approach can help to prevent incidents by ensuring effective migration management, maintain safety of navigation and allow for intervention at sea when and where necessary. A key tool is the recently established European Contact Group on Search and Rescue, which brings together experts from all Member States and Schengen Countries and which facilitates the exchange of information and experiences with all actors. I engaged with the Contact Group during its inaugural meeting on 22 March 2021 and I will continue to follow its work very closely.

*Mr Pietro Barbucci,  
President of Associazione Sante Malatesta, Pisa*

*Mr Maurizio Certini,  
Director of Centro Internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira, Firenze*

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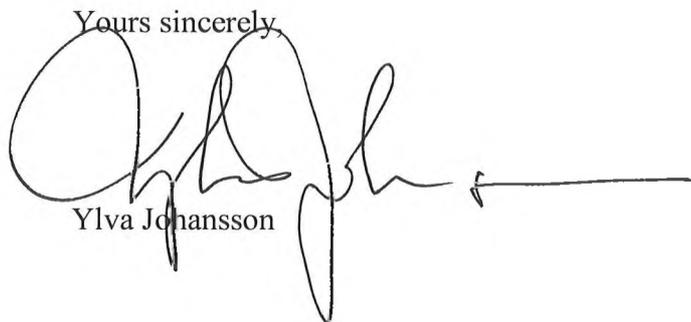
As part of the Pact, we are also strengthening our response to preventing irregular migration, including through targeted migration partnerships with third countries and by stepping up the fight against migrant smuggling. Reducing unsafe and irregular migration flows will contribute to avoiding loss of life during the perilous journey, whether on land or at sea. Later this year I will present a new EU Action plan against migrant smuggling. My services have launched a public consultation to invite all interested stakeholders to give their views on what new actions could be taken at EU level. We also need to provide safe and legal pathways to Europe and ensure that migrants legally in the EU can participate in and contribute to the well-being, prosperity and cohesion of European societies.

In Greece, the Commission continues to provide extensive financial and operational support to improve the conditions on the islands and to coordinate support by Member States, including as regards the relocation of vulnerable migrants. The dedicated Task Force we established in September 2020 together with the Greek authorities is working on a joint pilot to improve the situation on Lesbos, by better managing migration and asylum processes and setting up new, fully up-to-standard reception facilities on the islands in 2021. In parallel, works to improve the living conditions in the temporary reception facility of Mavrovouni, where people have received shelter after the fires in Moria, have significantly advanced. I will return again to the Greek islands shortly to take stock of the progress made.

The Commission also collaborates closely to support the authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who are developing a migration strategy 2021-2026. Establishing and managing the centre in Lipa is part of the strategy. I went to Bosnia-Herzegovina, including Lipa, last February, to discuss those issues personally with the national authorities.

I am grateful for your interest and engagement in this extremely important matter for Europe, and I firmly believe that through the right words and the right actions we can manage migration collectively in Europe in a normal and dignified manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ylva Johansson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right. The signature is written over the text 'Ylva Johansson'.

Ylva Johansson



European Council  
Cabinet of the President

SGS 21 / 002400

Brussels, 25. 05. 2021  
CAB PEC/CFS/sg

Dear Mr Barbucci,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April.

All loss of human lives at sea is tragic and it is imperative that, when such a situation arises, all actors comply with all applicable international rules to ensure the efficient coordination of search and rescue operations by the respective national competent authorities.

Following the migration crisis in 2015, EU leaders called for a comprehensive approach to migration which combined more effective control of the EU's external borders, increased external action and the internal aspects. Work is ongoing in the Council on the legislative proposals accompanying the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, which was presented by the Commission in response to those calls. At the same time, enhanced efforts to stem illegal trafficking of people and to stop smugglers' operations are ongoing.

Moreover, the EU has stepped up cooperation with north African states and has established a number of cooperation agreements and partnerships with them. This cooperation is underpinned by dedicated EU funds, as well as by individual contributions by Member States.

As regards the situation in camps, the Commission is actively assisting the competent authorities of both EU Member States and third countries, which remain fully responsible for the management of reception centres.

Yours sincerely,

Frédéric BERNARD  
Head of Cabinet

Mr Pietro BARBUCCI  
President of Associazione Sante Malatesta Onlus  
Piazza San Frediano, 5  
56126 Pisa, ITALY  
cc: Mr Maurizio Certini  
Director of Centro Internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira, Firenze, ITALY.

Il Presidente

D 201012 07.07.2021

Dott. Pietro Barbucci  
Presidente  
Associazione Sante Malatesta Onlus - Pisa

Dott. Maurizio Certini  
Direttore  
Centro Internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira - Firenze

*Cari Pietro e Maurizio,*

Gentile Presidente Barbucci, Gentile Direttore Certini,

Desidero ringraziarvi per la vostra lettera e per il vostro sostegno.

La situazione dei rifugiati e dei migranti nel Mediterraneo continua ad essere molto critica. Come ho ribadito durante l'ultimo Consiglio europeo di giugno, è nostro dovere innanzi tutto salvare le vite umane e far diventare la migrazione e l'asilo parte integrante di una più forte e più coesa politica estera dell'Unione europea.

Su questo tema il 18 maggio 2021, il Parlamento ha tenuto un dibattito<sup>1</sup>, durante il quale molti deputati hanno ribadito ancora una volta la necessità di portare avanti un'azione comune europea in grado di salvare le vite umane nel Mediterraneo e togliere terreno a trafficanti di esseri umani.

In altre parole, non possiamo rassegnarci ad un Mediterraneo trasformato in un cimitero di profughi se vogliamo far leva su questo mare per costruire nuovi ponti.

Come giustamente sottolineate nella vostra lettera, è necessario mettere in atto un meccanismo europeo di ricerca e salvataggio in mare, che utilizzi le competenze di tutti gli attori coinvolti, dagli Stati membri alla società civile alle agenzie europee.

I rifugiati e i migranti che arrivano sulle nostre coste devono essere accolti secondo il diritto europeo e dunque gli Stati membri hanno il dovere di applicare pienamente le norme contenute nella direttiva sull'accoglienza dei richiedenti protezione internazionale.

Il Parlamento europeo, in collaborazione con il Consiglio, oltre ad aver sostenuto anche dal punto di vista finanziario questi interventi, ha invitato le autorità e i diversi attori coinvolti ad assumersi le proprie responsabilità.

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<sup>1</sup> Recenti morti nel Mediterraneo e attività di ricerca e salvataggio in mare (dibattito) è reperibile sul sito: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-05-18-ITM-004\\_IT.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-05-18-ITM-004_IT.html)

Oltre ad aver avuto costanti scambi con i ministri greci e la Commissione europea, la commissione LIBE del Parlamento europeo segue da vicino la costruzione di un centro di accoglienza multifunzionale a Lesbo. Il nuovo "Fondo Asilo, migrazione e integrazione"<sup>2</sup> che entrerà in vigore nel luglio 2021 fornirà agli Stati membri ulteriori mezzi finanziari sostanziali per costruire sistemi di asilo equi ed efficienti, in solidarietà con i più bisognosi.

Inoltre, il Parlamento europeo lavora per un approccio olistico per una migrazione sicura, regolare e ordinata, necessaria per il futuro delle società europee e dei loro sistemi di protezione sociale.

Una relazione più stretta e dinamica tra il Nord e il Sud del Mediterraneo rappresenta, infatti, la premessa indispensabile per definire un approccio regionale condiviso di fronte a sfide comuni, quali la crescita demografica, il cambiamento climatico, l'inquinamento, le infrastrutture di trasporto, la pianificazione dello sviluppo urbano, l'incremento della domanda di energia e la scarsità di risorse primarie, come l'acqua.

È necessario dunque, favorire la creazione di partenariati globali. A tal proposito vorrei sottolineare che nel maggio 2021 il Parlamento europeo ha adottato la risoluzione "Protezione dei diritti umani e la politica migratoria esterna dell'UE"<sup>3</sup> che ribadisce l'impegno dell'Unione europea ad intensificare la sua cooperazione esterna con i paesi di origine, con i cittadini di paesi terzi e con altri attori non europei. .

Cordiali saluti,

*con amicizia*  
*David Maria SASSOLI*

David Maria SASSOLI

cc: - On. Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Presidente della Commissione per le libertà civili, la giustizia e gli affari interni

<sup>2</sup> Il Fondo Asilo, migrazione e integrazione è reperibile sul sito: [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2018/0248\(COD\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2018/0248(COD)&l=en)

<sup>3</sup> La risoluzione del PE sulla "Protezione dei diritti umani e la politica migratoria esterna dell'UE" è reperibile sul sito: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0242\\_IT.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0242_IT.html)