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Press Release

Migrants have rights too: The European Council must live up to the EU's role as champion of human rights

Caritas Europa calls on EU decision makers to take the respect of human rights of migrants into consideration amidst fears that the European Council might not back up the European Parliament's proposal to include a humanitarian mandate in the Regulation establishing the Eurosur border surveillance system in the forthcoming negotiations the two Institutions are to hold in short time.

Ahead of the forthcoming negotiations between the European Parliament and the European Council on the new Eurosur border surveillance system, Caritas Europa encourages the Council to maintain the basic human rights safeguards in the final Regulation, as proposed by the European Parliament.

“Although not fully satisfactory, the proposal of the European Parliament voted last week has at least the decency to take into account the human dignity of migrants as people with rights that must be respected” says Karolina Babicka, Caritas Europa Advocacy and Policy Officer on Asylum and Migration.

Because of the current restrictive approach to migration of EU Member States, Caritas Europa fears that the European Council might feel tempted to fight back the clause including a humanitarian mandate in the Regulation on Eurosur.

“The final Regulation must include this human rights approach. The EU cannot go on denying the very basic safeguards such as providing for protection to migrants and refugees in distress at sea and guaranteeing their human rights” says Karolina Babicka. “This is a step in the right direction. A step that will contribute to saving thousands of people from drowning or starving to death at sea.”

MEP Ska Keller(Greens), who worked on the amendments of the Regulation together with civil society organisations, has a similar view to Caritas Europa and stresses that “this vote sends an important signal to EU governments that they need to change the focus of Eurosur“.

Caritas Europa supports MEP Keller's stance and encourages Member States to regard migration from a positive approach to migration that would enrich both the Member States individually and the EU as a whole.

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