

# What's happening in the Mediterranean?

LATEST NEWS ON THE MIGRATION  
CRISIS IN EUROPE

## Germany assumes role of EU Council Presidency

Germany – which now holds the EU presidency, as of last week, is now pushing the EU for a solution to the migrant crisis. EU Interior Ministers hosted an online conference discussing security and migration, as it cannot just be Italy, Malta, Greece or Spain dealing with this issue. German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer hopes to be bringing new momentum to the topic of migration.

He said:

*“Europe is a community of values. Respecting human dignity and human rights is the most important thing and preventing deaths in the Mediterranean is our shared goal”*

## EU pleas for Greece to stop illegal pushbacks

European commission to propose a new system to monitor illegal pushbacks of migrants. Illegal pushback incidents throughout Europe are violations of human rights and have been condemned by Germany's Interior Minister who says the EU as a community MUST do more in a coordinated manner to address this given that only a few countries are taking migrants in after long delays at sea. This announcement is a step forward and follows the mounting evidence of pushbacks of migrants along the Croatian border and in the Aegean by masked criminals, although Greece continues to refuse any allegations.

MOAS pleads that the condemning of pushbacks should be expanded in the Mediterranean, where in the past few months, during the Covid-19 pandemic, several vessels in distress were pushed back into danger.



## Josep Borrell Visit to Malta

EU Commission's Vice President & High Representative of Foreign Affairs & Security Josep Borrell visited Malta [FP1] where they addressed the Libyan crisis & the importance of increasing the capacity of Libyan coastguards. Prime Minister Robert Abela urged for an automatic mechanism for the relocation of rescued migrants, after the Maltese government announced that it had reached an agreement with a number of European countries to relocate 284 migrants currently hosted in Malta. Borrell agreed that an automatic mechanism was what was needed to be able to save people at sea and quickly disembark them in Malta before sharing them across the EU. He added that working on a new pact for asylum and migration is paramount for the EU.

## **Relocations of unaccompanied refugee minors**

On 7 and 8 July, 49 unaccompanied children were relocated from Greece to Portugal and Finland as part of a relocation program that have been taking place over the past few months. Portugal has pledged to receive 500 unaccompanied minors under the program which is run in cooperation with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The program foresees the relocation 2000 such cases from Greece to other European Union countries as part of a scheme to help the Mediterranean country. Relocations of unaccompanied migrant children from Greece to Portugal, Finland, Germany and the UK is part of a relocation project supported and funded by the European Commission which has been welcomed by UN agencies as a more effective and humane means of migration. The next relocations will be to Belgium, France, Germany, Lithuania and Slovenia later this month.



## **52 migrants allowed to disembark in Malta after days at sea on animal cargo ship**

A group of 52 migrants who were rescued at sea off the coast of Libya and living in poor sanitary conditions on a Lebanese animal transport ship for five days, have finally been allowed to disembark in Malta, after Italy refused them permission to disembark in Lampedusa. After the medical evacuation of two people on Sunday, the ship's captain Mohammad Shaaban pleaded with the Maltese authorities to let the migrants ashore, as they were running out of food and water and were in rough seas.

## **Pope Francis appeals for aid and solidarity for migrants**

On the seventh anniversary of his visit to the Sicilian island of Lampedusa to meet with migrants, Pope Francis denounced the unimaginable “hell” of Libyan detention centres. The Pope, once again, appeals for aid and support for migrants and reaffirms that we must treat each other as brothers and sisters and show solidarity with one another.

### **What's next?**

On July 13th there will be a conference held in Italy on migration & to discuss closer cooperation with North African countries to address the current colossal issue of human trafficking & to discuss an ‘effective return policy’.