



Project:Boats for people

International Conference: Immigration and Political Issues in the Mediterranean Region

General Context:

Irregular immigration from South to north of the Mediterranean poses various political, economic and social challenges.

After the Second World War, North Mediterranean Countries were in need of Southern brains and skilled workers to recover. However, that didn't last long and the immigration policy shifted towards closing borders, or, in the best of cases, selective immigration.

With the widening economic gap between North and South Mediterranean countries, the immigration rates have increased. While Southerners were seeking security and a better living, the European policies made it impossible to have access to the European space through reinforcing the control of immigration of its borders.

The geographical location of the countries of central Mediterranean, as a gate to Africa, the expanded border zone, the failure of development model and the succession of economic, social and political crisis since 2011, all these factors have led to waves of migration to Northern shores, seeking a "better living". The worsening security situation that followed political changes in some Southern Mediterranean countries worsened the situation, the flows of migrants

increased, which exposed migrants to various risks and dangers such as Human Trafficking, in addition to sea dangers.

The depth of this tragedy and the humanitarian stories told by numbers of refugees, may force European politicians in the end to face the problem they had ignored for a long time, but taking measures may be elusive because of the unattractive possible options.

Europe is responsible for the deaths of southern migrants, since some European countries intervened in Libya in 2011 and participated in the creation of its instability, which led ordinary people to flee the country risking their lives in the sea.

And despite the smooth political transition , the social and economic situation in Tunisia may explode at any time as has been shown in the grim economic indicators, the liberal policies of successive governments after the revolution and the continued economic and social marginalization as a result of copying the same development model.

With the failure of different mediations to solve the conflict in Libya, and the growing power of armed groups and human trafficking networks that crippled the establishment of a powerful central government, the precarious Libyan shores will remain the destination of dreamers for a better life despite the dangers.

After the last Turkish immigrants' waves, the terrorist attack in Paris and the security threats in different European countries, calls to modify European Immigration policies towards more firmness have been growing, which places more responsibilities on human rights organizations to defend the freedom of movement and respect international conventions related to Human Rights.

The number of voices calling for change in migration policies is raising especially after the Paris terrorist attack and continued security threats to a number of European capitals and the proven entry of terrorists among Syrian refugees.

This conference comes after the declaration of the European Delegation "Revision of the European Neighborhood policy", in November 18, 2015, which includes a revision of the political and strategic options that continued to put forward the security approach in dealing with migrants , at the expense of the development dimension.

Axes of the Conference:

1st Axe: The current political situation and its impact on Immigration

2nd Axe: European immigration policies in the context of the current changes.

Targets :

- Understanding current political, economic and social changes in the Mediterranean
- The extent of the effect of current changes on European immigration policies
- The consolidation of the role of civil society and the importance of its participation in making immigration policies
- The consolidation of a comprehensive dimension of sustainable development in North-South Mediterranean relations and in the issue of immigration
- The consolidation of the role of civil society organizations in defending immigrants' rights in Southern Countries (Tunisia/Libya)
- Contribute to build fair immigration and movement policies which rely on a legal approach and on the respect of the fundamental human right of movement, and based on international conventions about the rights of migrant workers and their family.
- Dealing with the dilemma of sea migrants in the Mediterranean in the context of neighborhood relations with Northern countries and through humanitarian approach, far from the security solutions so as to address the causes of irregular immigration in relation with economic and social disparities, the growing exclusion and the internal and regional conflicts as well as the aggravation of terrorism scourge .

Draft programme:

Wednesday, December 18, 2015

Place: Majestic Hotel

Opening session:

09.00 – 09.10: Opening statement of the FTDES

Opening Statement RLX

Opening statement secretary of state of immigration

1st Scientific Session: The current political situation and its impact on Immigration

09.10 – 09.30: Marie Christine Vergiat (European Parliament member)

09.30 – 10.10: Torchani Marwan (Libyan Magistrates Association)

10.10 – 11.00 : Discussion

11.00 – 11.15 : Break

2nd Scientific Session: European immigration policies in the context of the current changes

11.15 – 11.35: Olivier klochard (Migreurope)

11.35 – 11.55 : Rebai Leila (College Professor, Euro Mediterranean Human Rights Network)

11.55 – 12.15 : Ben Hsin Sadok (National Tunisian Workers Union (UGTT) Expert

12.15 – 13.00: Discussion