

## EUROPEAN MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE MIGRATIONS

# For European policies based on rights and dignified reception

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15th June 2023, Strasbourg



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## For European policies based on rights and dignified reception

*This document is the result of a joint project involving more than 50 European organisations and local and regional authorities within the Alliance Migrations.*

*This document is a response to the latest version of the Asylum and Migration Pact.*

*This document is based on the recommendations of the ECI (2023)000002, entitled "Ensuring a dignified reception of migrants in Europe".*

## A paradigm shift in the way we think about hospitality: an opportunity for everyone.

On this 15 June 2023, and following several working sessions involving local governments, voluntary organisations and organisations of exiled people working in the field of reception and inclusion of men, women and children newly arrived in Europe, we submit to you this manifesto "For European policies based on rights and dignified reception", at a time when the European institutions are working on a new Pact on Migration and Asylum.

With our many voices, made up of local and regional authorities, associations of general interest and exiled persons working in a European Union country and/or at European level, we wish to alert you to the many observations that we are witnessing and experiencing, which run counter to the values that we uphold, even though they are identical to those advocated by the European Union since its foundation.

We are also seeing a rise in hate speech and discrimination against newcomers seeking refuge in Europe, based on their country of origin, nationality, administrative status, skin colour or gender identity. The European Union must consider the seriousness of this phenomenon and respond to it, in consort with local organisations and governments, by working on policies to combat discrimination and racial hatred, as well as policies to raise awareness of interculturality.

All too often, numerous international and European conventions are flouted, and numerous rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights are ignored.

Migration and reception policies are mainly, if not exclusively, national and European responsibilities. One might think that they therefore concern only the States and the European Union. However, because policies are designed and applied through the spectrum of security before humanity, of closure instead of reception, we are on the front line when women, men and children arrive on our territories. When they are deprived of their most fundamental rights, we work to restore them, out of a moral and legal obligation. The arrival of new people in our towns and cities is an asset and an opportunity, and working to ensure access to rights means working to ensure social cohesion for the whole population.

Migration is a natural and universal phenomenon that has always existed. Experience and studies show the positive impact of this phenomenon on host societies. It is all the more positive when all the stakeholders work together. The participation of the people concerned is one of the stakeholders essential to the coherence and relevance of any public action. Millions of examples exist and should be widely promoted.

It is therefore on the basis of our local reception and inclusion practices, thought out collectively and as closely as possible to the needs of exiled people, included in the construction process, that we are formulating recommendations for a Europe that is faithful to its values and in tune with local dynamics.

## Recommendations from the territories on migration and reception

We, organisations and local governments, deplore the fact that the European Union's external borders are becoming increasingly secure, as are the borders between Member States. The exceptional re-establishment of internal borders is being extended year after year. This security prevents the entry of people, who are immediately considered to be "illegal" when they arrive on our territory. As a direct consequence, we are witnessing the proliferation of trafficking networks for men, women and children made vulnerable by the lack of routes to Europe.

These people arrive on our shores in situations that are undignified, precarious and even distressing, and our associations and local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to respond. Putting an end to this political approach is a prerequisite for respecting people's rights throughout their migratory journey and building a future in our host countries.

### Recommendation 1: Develop reception policies

- 1. We call for this deleterious approach to people in exile to be abandoned and for safe channels of access that respect rights to be put in place for people coming to Europe.**
- 2. We call for recognition of the vulnerability of people seeking refuge for climatic, health and socio-economic reasons, fleeing inhumane living conditions, discrimination or danger.**
- 3. We call for the demilitarisation of internal borders.**
- 4. We call for an end to the confinement of children, women and men.**

We, organisations and local governments, see that the primary consequence of this securitisation is the creation of increasingly dangerous and all too often fatal migratory routes for people, their commoditisation and the development of human trafficking. Every day, more and more resources are deployed to prevent people arriving in Europe from going and settling in the country of their choice. This choice may be guided by existing family ties and/or professional and personal opportunities. This policy keeps people in unwanted countries, making it difficult for them to take their place in host societies. When people do manage to get to the desired country, they may find themselves denied access to their fundamental rights because European regulations stand in the way of their personal and professional inclusion.

These administrative obstacles are becoming more and more complex as we work to support these people and come up against regulations that deny exiles access to their rights. Removing these obstacles would enable local authorities and associations to fully support exiles in building their future in a given area.

## Recommendation 2: Protect people

- 1. We call for an end to the externalisation of borders and an immediate ban on illegal practices such as refoulement at borders.**
- 2. We call for a revision of the Dublin Regulation and the introduction of a free choice of country of settlement for exiles. We have observed that this freedom granted to people from Ukraine has been beneficial for their integration.**

We, the organisations and local governments, have observed that the living conditions of exiles in the Member States are becoming increasingly precarious, as a result of the obstruction of access to rights (unconditional accommodation, minimum reception conditions, access to work, studies, recognition of diplomas, etc.). In most European countries, people fleeing Ukraine have been able to receive unconditional accommodation, interpreters, immediate access to rights and the prospect of rapid autonomy.

It is therefore possible to implement these minimum conditions through European decisions that facilitate reception, respect for dignity and access to rights in our territories. They should be generalised so that all newly-arrived people can quickly and with dignity build a life project in our territories.

## Recommendation 3: Respect for everyone's rights

- 1. We call for the formulation, promotion and compulsory nature of a reception standard in the Member States allowing them immediate access to rights, including the right to work, to housing and to material reception conditions.**
- 2. We demand immediate and unconditional protection for all people in vulnerable situations.**
- 3. We demand recognition of unconditional rights such as health.**
- 4. We call on the European Union to ensure that Member States provide effective support in learning the language of the host country and promote the economic integration of people through access to work and education.**
- 5. We are calling for upward harmonisation of asylum law to ensure that people are protected, both in terms of the recognition of vulnerabilities and the granting of rights to asylum seekers and refugees.**
- 6. We are calling for European solidarity and substantial funding to enable these prerogatives to be implemented uniformly across the EU. Local governments and organisations must be able to benefit from this funding to support their actions in a sustainable way.**

We, organisations and local governments, note that our consultation and participation enable the development and implementation of policies that are more humane and better adapted to local needs. We also note that citizen and political participation, and in particular that of women, men and children affected by migration and/or exile, enriches democracy and is of real benefit to public policy. Our territories are full of participatory schemes with positive results that should be supported and extended to bring inclusive democracy to life with all the people present and active in our territories.

### Recommendation 4: Work together with the people concerned

- 1. We call for real participation by local organisations and governments, and by the people affected, in the discussion and implementation of European policies.**
- 2. We are calling for funding to support the creation and support of organisations of people affected.**
- 3. We call for a stronger presence of people concerned in consultation forums within the European institutions.**
- 4. We call for the right to vote for non-EU nationals to be standardised across the Member States, so that the fact of residing in a territory allows non-EU residents to be taken into account.**

On Thursday 15 June, we are meeting in Strasbourg to convey this message, but also to report on all the reception and inclusion practices that have been co-constructed in different European cities, respectful of fundamental rights but also generating social links and citizen participation.

These practices, which you will find in the appendix to this document, respond to two key challenges facing local areas in terms of reception:

1. Unconditional reception, access to rights and support for exiles.
2. From accommodation to access to sustainable and dignified housing in Europe.

Our findings and solutions reflect the reality of Europe's territories. It is more urgent than ever to take them into account and work together for European policies based on rights and dignified reception.

For further information:  
[www.alliance-migrations.fr](http://www.alliance-migrations.fr)

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