

## MANIFIESTO

### **No more excuses. No more barriers. WE WANT TO WELCOME THEM NOW!**

The situation has become untenable. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are suffering refugees and migrants' greatest humanitarian crisis since the World War II. The number of people fleeing their country to save their lives due to armed conflicts, violation of rights, violence and persecution, is increasing day by day. There are already more than 65 million people worldwide. In 2016, 1,259,265 people applied for international protection in their attempt to seek refuge in Europe; of whom only 15,755 did it in Spain. The Mediterranean Sea has become the greatest shame of Europe; in the last 17 years, 35,000 people have lost their lives in its waters; since 2016, almost 7,000 have done so, including children who have been left without a future. What is still worse, our Government looks the other way while these deaths could have been avoided if people had counted on safe and legal routes for protection.

In addition, our multinational companies, as well as other world powers, are also at the root of the causes of forced migrations: wars caused by economic and energetic interests, violation of rights, labour slavery...

Meanwhile, **what are Europe and Spain doing?** Far from giving a response in favour of people, we shielded our borders before the arrival of thousands and thousands of people seeking refuge, we have toughened asylum rules to make it increasingly more difficult for them to access the right to international protection, and we have supported 'illegal' agreements with unsafe third countries, such as Turkey or African countries, in order to get them to 'manage' the future of millions of people fleeing war or people whose lives are jeopardised by persecution. These are people whose human rights are repeatedly being violated, first in their home countries and then when they arrive in ours, in spite of the fact Spain must grant them international protection, abiding by international laws and universal declarations. The rule of law is in crisis.

To make matters worse, the Spanish Government is not fulfilling its own commitments. Thousands of people living in subhuman conditions in refugee camps inside and outside Europe are still waiting to be accepted. September 2017 is the deadline for Spain to receive 17,337 asylum seekers the government pledged to permit into the country. So far, we have only received 7% of all of them. A disgraceful percentage that gives Spain the European record for failing to implement the agreement.

In addition, in 2016 Spain has toughened restrictions to limit the right of asylum to thousands of people fleeing conflicts other than the Syrian one, and who also suffer violations of their rights.

Now more than ever, it is necessary and urgent that all citizens, groups, associations, organizations and social movements take to the streets to say loudly and clearly what we want:

- We want a welcoming Europe not a Fortress Europe.
- We want the right to life and shelter to be protected, we are against the violation of the rights of people who try to reach our borders to flee death.
- We want these people to be welcomed, in compliance with international laws and fulfilling the obligations and commitments undertaken. We cannot expel anyone to unsafe countries.

We all demand that the rights of people who are fleeing their countries are respected and that they can therefore apply for the international protection they are entitled to in countries such as Spain, without impediment and in an effective way.

We demand:

- That, in order to do so, Spain and the rest of the European countries, ensure access to safe and legal routes, such as humanitarian corridors or the possibility of applying for asylum at their embassies.
- That Spain and the rest of the EU governments adopt urgent reception measures, and that they enforce them immediately, laying emphasis on special protection needs for people in situations of vulnerability, such as children, women and LGBT people.
- That the European Union revoke border control, return and readmission agreements with countries which do not respect human rights.
- That Spain and the EU carry out reception policies to ensure refugees and migrants' dignity and inclusion.
- And, of course, that Governments strengthen development cooperation to work against the causes leading to refugees' displacement, in order to prevent them from fleeing their countries.

For all these reasons, on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June, we are taking to the street to show our indignation and to urge the Government of Spain and the EU not to gamble with the lives of millions of people and to grant reception and migratory policies that guarantee human rights.

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