

Mediterranean migration route: help for Italy and long-term solutions

To avoid migrants continuing to drown while trying to reach Italy, EU countries must offer their help, say MEPs.

The Civil Liberties Committee held on Wednesday a hearing on search-and-rescue operations, the relations between the different actors including EU military vessels, Frontex staff and NGOs, the need to fight people smugglers as well as cooperation with Libyan authorities.

Italian Coast Guard Captain Sandro Gallinelli, Frontex executive director Fabrice Leggeri, as well as representatives of Doctors without Borders and Human Rights Watch presented the committee with their views.

NGOs' role, cooperation with Libya, long-term solutions

Most MEPs in the debate defended the work of NGOs from criticism that their presence and rescue interventions are encouraging perilous journeys and even supporting human traffickers. Nevertheless, some MEPs also agreed that a code of conduct is needed to create order in operations at sea.

Many voiced doubts about the cooperation with Libya, pointing to the political instability in the country, the unreliability of its authorities and the heightened risk of abuse and violence faced by migrants who are returned to its shores.

Finally, most MEPs considered that a longer-term solution is needed, *via* a well-functioning asylum system, based on fair burden-sharing by all member states, combined with legal ways for migrating to the EU as well as a strategy to address the root causes of migration in the countries of origin.

Quick facts

Italy is the main EU arrival point for migrants and asylum-seekers since the closure of the Balkans route and the EU-Turkey deal. In the first six months of 2017, already [over 85 000 people arrived on its shores](#), an increase of almost 10% compared to the same period last year.

According to [UNHCR data](#), 2 253 persons have died or gone missing trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea between 1 of January and 30 of June, almost all of them (2 171) in the

Central Mediterranean route to Italy.

Under the two emergency relocation decisions adopted in 2015, 34 953 asylum-seekers likely to be granted refugee status should be transferred from Italy to other EU countries, but so far [only 7 615 have been moved](#) (as of 10 July).

Watch the video recording of the hearing

Further information

[Arrivals to Italy as of 10 July 2017 \(Italian Government\)](#)

[UNHCR: Situation in Italy](#)

[Audiovisual material for media](#)

[Webpage of the Civil Liberties Committee](#)

Contacts

Estefania NARRILLOS

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 31324 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 73661 (STR)

 (+32) 498 98 39 85

 [@EP_Justice](#)

 estefania.narrillos@europarl.europa.eu

Maja OREL SCHWARZ

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 32357 (BXL)

 (+32) 473 86 49 74

 [@EP_Justice](#)

 maja.orel@europarl.europa.eu
