



Bundesverband e.V.



Kreisverband
Berlin-Mitte e. V.



PRO ASYL
DER EINZELFALL ZÄHLT.

Aurore
ASSOCIATION

Diakonie
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Asylum and migration : a key issue for Europe

The Paris Declaration

March 7, 2019

The signatories of this Declaration are German and French actors involved daily in the reception, assistance and counselling of refugees. Together, they want to emphasize that individual right to protection and asylum, respect of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and promotion of human rights, as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union, are founding values of the European Union that shall be urgently protected. At a time when governments of Germany, France and other countries are trying to exploit the issue of a common European asylum and immigration policy, it is up to associations, federations and other organizations, along with cities, as civil society actors, to publicly and collectively express their views in Europe. EU States must agree on an asylum policy that takes into account both the protection and interests of refugees as well as those of the Member states, at the borders or within their national territory, along with Europe's responsibility in the cause of exile. The individual right to asylum is a human right and should therefore not be restricted.

European governments adopt very different approaches in their response to global refugee protection challenges. Their actions are often driven by their internal political situation and national interests, and motivated by an emotional and partial public debate, itself dominated by myths rather than facts. European institutions' incapacity to act reflects that of the Member states themselves. Both Member states and the European Union agree on the lowest common denominator: strengthening external border controls and surveillance and shifting their responsibilities towards third-countries, transit countries and countries of origin.

As a result, all Member states have adopted stricter national migrants and refugees' reception policies. Thus, this calls for an increased mobilization of those defending migrants and refugees' fundamental rights. In this context, civil society actors such as NGOs, federations and other organizations, as well as cities involved in the reception and care of refugees and migrants, are called to speak out clearly and jointly in Europe – not only on their concrete reception experiences, but also on related social and political challenges. Integration cannot happen by itself. We need an integration policy that provides the necessary means and

resources for its correct implementation. And we need answers on how we want to live together in an increasingly diverse society.

Together, we want to gather associations, federations and organizations alongside involved cities, starting in France and Germany, then extending to other European states. First in Paris, then in Berlin, and in other European municipalities that are interested in participating, we plan to exchange ideas and mutually support each other, capitalize analyses and results from experts research, and built on this basis a common network. This way, we can contribute together to the debate in Europe and bring our experience, expertise and proposals.

As of now, our biggest and most central demands include:

- Unconditional respect of the principle of *non-refoulement*, as set out in the Geneva Convention, at all European borders
- Non-criminalization of civil society actors that help migrants, as it constitutes essential assistance and support to those in need
- Priority to rescue operations at sea and to immediate reception of all people rescued as well as those arriving by sea on external borders and in European ports; a solidarity-based distribution mechanism that guarantees the right to a fair asylum procedure. The “safe harbors” initiative of no less than 40 German cities is an example
- Strengthening the role of cities and municipalities in the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as emerging “cities of solidarity” networks
- Welcoming refugees is an investment in our society’ future. Circumstances of arrival are crucial for a successful integration and the development of refugees’ potential. What matters is to promote refugees and to provide them as fast as possible access to decent housing, daycare, education, and the labour market

The starting point of the Declaration of Paris is a Franco-German initiative, involving organizations interested in taking things further and refusing to leave room to far-right hatred campaigns. On the basis of a Franco-German tandem, a network and a regular exchange of information between civil society and other European municipalities will be implemented.

Signatories :

Association Aurore
AWO Kreisverband Berlin-Mitte e. V.
AWO Bundesverband e. V.
Deutscher Caritasverband
Der Paritätische Gesamtverband
Diakonie Deutschland
Emmaüs Solidarités
Fédération des acteurs de la solidarité

Forum réfugiés-Cosi
France terre d’asile
Groupe SOS Solidarités
ProAsyl
Samu social de Paris
Secours Catholique – Caritas France
Uniopps
Uriopss Île-de-France