Press release | 15.04.2015

Mediterranean refugee tragedy

European sea rescue programme urgently needed

Following the capsizing of a boat carrying refugees in the Mediterranean on Monday, which is believed to have led to up to 400 deaths, the Greens have called for a European sea rescue programme, financed by EU member states. Green migration spokesperson **Judith Sargentini** said:

"The scale of this latest catastrophe in the Mediterranean is truly shocking. While there will be no shortage of European politicians expressing their horror, the reality is that Europe is also responsible for these deaths by turning a blind eye to the precarious journeys engaged on by desperate refugees. This cannot continue.

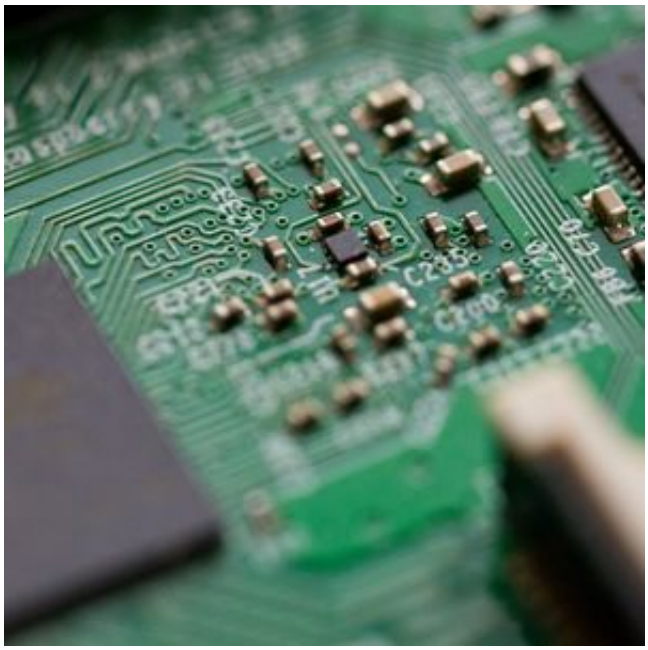
"We need a European sea rescue programme for refugees. All EU member states should contribute to this programme both financially and with resources like ships and helicopters. We cannot simply expect the Mediterranean states alone to bear responsibility for this European issue. The FRONTEX border control programme TRITON aims to protect borders and nothing more. Replacing the Mare Nostrum programme with this border control mission was a mistake, which is leading to more tragic losses of life, as was predicted. A European sea rescue programme must now be introduced without delay.

"Sea rescue alone will clearly not suffice. If we want to combat human trafficking and smuggling effectively, the answer is not reducing rescue operations but providing for safe and legal access for refugees to Europe. To this end, we are deeply concerned about EU proposals to outsource asylum procedures to third countries in North Africa. The Commission cannot oversee the outsourcing of Europe's responsibility to protect the human rights of refugees."

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Judith Sargentini

Member

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