Press release | 03.06.2022

# Migration : solidarity should not be a crime

## MEPs travel to Riace in support of Mimmo Lucano

Today, 3 June 2022, a delegation of MEPs from progressive groups held a press conference with the former mayor of Riace Domenico “Mimmo” Lucano, who was sentenced to 13 years and 2 months in prison for “criminal conspiracy to assist illegal immigration, fraud, embezzlement and abuse of office“. Like him, too many citizens and local authorities are facing prosecution and sentences, in several member states, for acting in solidarity with those seeking refuge in the EU.

The MEPs Damien Carême, Rosa D’Amato and Cornelia Ernst traveled to Riace to express their solidarity with Mimmo Lucano and to highlight their commitment in favour of an European reception policy based on solidarity and humanity. They visited the “Riace global village” that has been praised, amongst others, by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

**Mimmo Lucano**, former mayor of Riace, comments:

*“The criminalization of solidarity does not only concern me, but many other people and organizations. There have been many attempts of repression. The notoriety of Riace is important precisely because here, immigration provides a solution. I have represented, from this place, Italy and the world of respect for human rights, especially for people fleeing wars. Humanity is the torment of those who want barriers.”*

**Damien Carême** Greens/EFA MEP, member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, comments:

*“As a mayor, Mimmo has refused the State’s inaction, compensated for the failures of current European policies and proved that another model is possible. His sentence, and the proceedings launched, within the EU, against so many other elected officials, associations, and citizens who showed solidarity must be denounced and must stop immediately.*

*These abuses are all the more unacceptable as, in the context of the war in Ukraine, the EU has proven that it can welcome with dignity and protect refugees. This should be done for all refugees.*

*Here, in Riace, symbolically, we owe it to ourselves to continue our actions in favor of a welcoming European Union, one that shows solidarity and lives up to its values. We will not stop because every day we prove that another way is possible”*

**Rosa d'Amato** Greens/EFA MEP,  member of the Committee for regional development, comments:

*"Through this mission, we repeat what we have been saying all along: we want a welcoming Europe. A different way, based on solidarity and fairness, is possible. We need to change the narrative and make reception the key value. We need to fight back against the shrinking of civil society and build a society based on human rights."*

**Cornelia Ernst** GUE/NGL MEP, member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, comments:

*"We have travelled to Riace to express our full solidarity and political support to Mimmo Lucano. I am strongly concerned that the criminalization of people on the move, and of the ones supporting them including local authorities and citizens, is spreading and intensifying all over Europe: in Italy, Greece, Croatia, Poland and other Member States. The case of Mimmo, whose engagement is recognized globally, is outrageous. Solidarity with people on the move is never a crime, and neither is fleeing your country."*

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**Responsible MEPs**



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Member



Rosa D’Amato

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