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Urgent need for search and rescue mission in the Mediterranean

Migration

MEPs have just voted on the need for an EU search and rescue mission in the Mediterranean. The Pylos shipwreck in Greece, which occurred on 14th June, leading to the death of over six hundred men, women and children, is a recent example of countless predictable and preventable deaths at sea. The Greens/EFA Group has long called for an EU-led search and rescue mission in the Med and for an end to the criminalisation of those who provide assistance to people in need.

Erik Marquardt MEP, Greens/EFA negotiator on the file, comments:

"Saving lives at sea should be the top priority of EU states. In reality, it is not. It seems more important that fewer people arrive than that more survive. The shipwreck in Pylos shows once again that without reliable state-led search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean, deadly shipwrecks will continue to be the tragic normality at our external borders. Instead of saving lives, EU governments have been focusing on deterrence and criminalising the very people who are substituting the humanitarian duties of Member States.

"We need an independent, transparent and international investigation into what happened with the Pylos shipwreck and the actions by the Hellenic Coast Guard. The EU and its Member States must assist the Greek authorities in identifying bodies and missing persons. Survivors must also be treated humanely and with dignity treatment, including the relocation of survivors to where they have family links and can receive adequate care.

"The words in this important resolution must now be followed by actions. The cooperation with the criminal Libyan Coast Guard must end. It is unacceptable that the EU is funding criminals involved in smuggling and human trafficking. The EU has a humanitarian responsibility and a moral duty to rescue persons in danger. Sea rescue NGOs should receive funds from the Commission to save lives. The EU needs to urgently establish, coordinate and fund a state-led EU Search and Rescue mission, ensuring that lives are no longer lost at sea."

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Responsible MEPs



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