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## EU intervention urgently needed to save lives at sea

### Migration

Today, Members of the European Parliament will debate the need for a European solution on asylum and migration including search and rescue in the Mediterranean sea. Yesterday, the International Organisation for Migration's '[Missing Migrants Project](#)' reported that nearly 6,000 people have died in the Med trying to reach Europe since the start of last year and [nearly 30,000 have died](#) since 2014. The Greens/EFA Group are calling on Member States to respect international and human rights law, show solidarity with those Member States faced with a disproportionate number of arrivals, and to take on a stronger role in search and rescue in the Mediterranean.

**Tineke Strik** MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, comments:

*"The new figures from the IOM are a grim reminder that the Mediterranean is a particularly deadly route for people fleeing war and persecution. Instead of supporting those in need of help at sea, the EU is funding third countries with poor human rights records to keep refugee boats from reaching our shores. All that results from this approach is more death. We urgently need safe and legal pathways for asylum seekers to reach Europe.*

*"NGOs are carrying out vital work where governments and the EU are failing and they should not be criminalised for doing what in reality the governments should be doing: Saving lives at sea. It is an international obligation. NGOs vessels carrying out Search and Rescue operations in the Mediterranean are being refused at EU ports for days and sometimes even weeks. Disembarkation must be made possible for all people rescued at the nearest safe port.*

*"European coastal states have an international obligation to rescue people at sea and bring them to shore, but they refuse to do so in a cynical attempt to force solidarity from other member states. That's why we need to hold those states accountable for violating this obligation and putting lives at risk. But we also need a permanent and mandatory relocation mechanism for the fair distribution of refugees across Europe.*

*"The EU should fund a state-led search and rescue mission and the European Commission must take more responsibility in the coordination of search and rescue and force Member States to take their responsibility."*

## More:

[The debate can be watched live here shortly.](#)

The European Commission on 21 November presented a new action plan for the central Mediterranean that will be discussed in the Council on 25 November.

Search and rescue is an obligation under international law; disembarkation must be made possible for all people rescued as soon as possible.

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Tineke Strik

Member

**Contact person**



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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