



31st Regular Session of the Human Rights Council - 29th February to 24th March 2016
ITEM 2 - Interactive dialogue on Annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Oral statement
“Situation of migrants in transit”

Mr President,

APG23 welcomes the report of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights on the “Situation of migrants in transit”¹.

The Association operates in support of migrants and refugees in Lebanon, Greece and also in Italy, where we work on the front line in the port of Reggio Calabria. Migrants are hosted in many of our structures and family homes, in various regions of Italy.

On the 29th of February, 93 Syrian refugees, 24 families with 41 children, arrived at Fiumicino airport in Rome in a legal manner, thanks to a pilot project of humanitarian channels implemented below an agreement between the Italian Government, the Lebanon authorities, the Community of St. Egidio, the Federation of the Evangelical Churches in Italy and the Waldensian Evangelical Church in collaboration with our Association.

The project consists of enabling “international migrants” to enter Italy with a humanitarian visa (LTV) under Art. 25 of the European Union Migration Regulation², and have access to the procedure to claim asylum upon their arrival in Italy. The project plans to welcome one thousand persons in a two-year period, with priority given to women with children, trafficked people, elderly people, and people with disabilities or affected with pathologies.

This pilot project shows how it is possible to organise legal entry of international migrants in vulnerable situation to enter legally Europe and prevent trafficking, smuggling and avoidable deaths in the Mediterranean sea.

Mr President,

Migrant children are children regardless they are refugees, migrate for economic reasons, are accompanied or not or are irregular. Restrictive immigration policies have often prevailed over child protection. Despite the improvements in law and practice, tens of thousands of migrant children are still at risk of detention. As emphatically stated by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and by the Special Rapporteurs, such detention is inconsistent with the best interest of the child and represents a clear violation of child’s rights.

We know this and see this among the children with whom we work, therefore insist on banning detention of all children for the purpose of immigration control. We further recommend the introduction of penalties in case of violation. Strict measures and responsibilities need to be defined and applied, in order to make child detention illegal.

In this regard, APG23 welcomes the initiative of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to produce a general comment on the human rights of children in the context of international migration and look forward to it.

Thank you!

¹ A/HRC/31/35, pag 4

² Art. 25 of the Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code).