



*Jesuit Refugee Service
-Europe-
Service Jésuite des Réfugiés*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NGOs express serious concern on proposed EU return and standards

A coalition of NGOs reacted to today's EU policy developments on the detention and removal of irregular migrants with concern. 13 organisations involved in migration and asylum issues responded to the draft of a directive on common standards for return by suggesting a set of nine principals to ensure respect for human rights.

Underlining the nine principals presented by the NGOs today in Brussels is concern that return policies should fully respect the needs and the dignity of individuals. Those who are facing detention or removal must have access to a legal review and advice; vulnerable people such as children, victims of trafficking and seriously ill people should not be removed or detained; and family unity should be respected. They also called for the establishment of independent monitoring and control bodies. In the case of people who can not be removed within a short period, they should be granted legal status. These safeguards are essential if the 'dignity' of immigrants, often presented as a priority by Vice-President Franco Frattini, is to be respected.

The Jesuit Refugee Service objects in particular to plans for the systematic use of detention across Europe and for the proposed limit of the duration of detention to six months. JRS has worked at grass-roots level for over 10 years with detained migrants in European countries and through this experience campaigns specifically on this issue at EU level. JRS is concerned that detention of irregular migrants should not be a systematic part of any common asylum policy in Europe: detention should always be the absolute exception and last resort, and persons belonging to vulnerable categories should never be detained. Further, the conditions in detention centers in Europe often fail to meet human rights standards, and in this context, the limit proposed this morning on the duration of detention to six months is far too long. Renaud de Villaine, Policy and Advocacy Officer for Jesuit Refugee Service Europe commented: "The Jesuit Refugee Service is disappointed to see the use of detention in Europe encouraged by the Commission. This costly measure tarnishes the EU's human rights record."

For further information, please contact:

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Background info: the declaration on "Common principles on removal of irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers" is supported by: Amnesty International Europe, Caritas Europa, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Cimade (France), European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Federazione delle Chiese evangeliche in Italia (FCEI), Iglesia Evangelica Espanola, Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe (JRS-Europe), Human Rights Watch, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Quaker Council for European Affairs, Save the Children, Sensoa

*JRS Europe is a network of 20 offices working in Europe with and for refugees and displaced people
It is part of the JRS international network and a project of the Jesuit Conference of European Provincials.*

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