

Zagreb, 20th of May 2019.

## **CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES' DEMANDS AHEAD OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS**

From the Croatian representatives in the European Parliament, we expect to demand from the Republic of Croatia:

- An end to violence and illegal activities at the borders and conducting thorough investigations into the illegal and violent pushbacks of refugees across the borders of the Republic of Croatia and sanctioning those responsible for violence and the violation of laws at the Croatian borders.
- An end to the misused and partial interpretation of Croatian and European legislation in order to justify the violation of rights. All persons should be enabled to exercise the rights they are entitled to. An access to the asylum system and respect for legal and moral principles related to persons forced to migrate is a prerequisite for further development of a functional and just system based on solidarity.
- An end to all activities that criminalize solidarity and prevent access to information and disable the civil society in supporting and assisting people on the move. Help and support for people who were forced to leave their homes, as well as any other human beings, is a legal and moral obligation and the very foundation of a healthy society. The ongoing marginalization and spread of fear contribute to the development of xenophobia and the reduction of the solidarity capacity of the society.
- Further development of the system and investment in the inclusion of newcomers in the society. It is necessary to adopt a comprehensive migration and integration policy, based on the analyzes of the current state and needs of both migrants and the local communities. The Republic of Croatia should invest in building an inclusive society that helps developing confidence and permanent ties between citizens and prevents and reduces xenophobia and social exclusion. It is also necessary to direct adequate resources, both at national and EU level, to support a two-way process of integration, which includes cooperation between all actors - local community, civil society, citizens (newcomers and domiciles) and private sector.

From the Croatian representatives in the European Parliament, we expect to demand from the European Union:

- Providing safe and legal routes for persons seeking security in the European Union. Enabling safe and legal routes is a key contribution that the EU can provide as a global response to migration challenges, which would significantly reduce the risks and uncertainties faced by people who are forced to leave their homes. The resettlement program is a step in that direction, but the exclusivity of such mechanism and the limited number of people involved keeps us far from a purposeful solution. The EU should continue to find solutions for the acceptance and protection of people based on a humane and dignified approach. Proposals that in the end lead to the instrumentalization of relocation, that support migration control or introduce the grounds for exclusion of certain individuals based on the "perspective of integration" of an

individual, undermine the very essence of relocation and should be rejected. In addition to increasing the number of people involved in the resettlement program, the European governments should create other safe and legal refugee routes. An important step in this direction would be abolishing the family reunification restrictions, i.e. the extension of the rights regulating the reunification of the family, in order to make them less restrictive.

- Providing a functional asylum system. Every reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) must be based on human rights, have clear goals and work on fixing the dysfunctions of the existing system. Although initiated, CEAS changes have not been approved and it remains unclear when and how the process of final approval of various proposals will continue in the European Parliament. But every sustainable solution must include a deep re-examination of the Dublin regulation with a permanent division of responsibility and procedural guarantees for the protection of asylum seekers from the violations of their fundamental rights. The European Parliament, as a legislative partaker, should ensure that any reform of the CEAS protects and expands the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, instead of diminishing them. It is necessary to establish procedures that would ensure timely disembarkation of rescued persons from ships and the allocation of responsibilities for their acceptance among the EU Member States, which should be enabled by the European Commission. It is important to use sanctioning measures for those Member States that violate human rights and do not want to participate in the allocation of responsibilities.
- An end to harmful co-operation with governments outside the EU, endangering the lives, safety and human rights of refugees and migrants - such as Afghanistan, Libya and Turkey, as well as providing solidarity support from the EU towards Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia). The EU should strengthen its role in solving the real causes of forced displacement, including conflicts, the lack of safety, social violence and repression, supporting permanent solutions to prevent displacement and shorten the duration of the process. The EU can support other countries and regions in building an asylum system and the reception capacities, but that also means that the EU is expected to further develop and improve the system on its territory too, and not to export it to countries beyond its borders.
- Reducing and limiting the jurisdiction of Frontex and establishing an effective, independent border control mechanism. Numerous testimonies and reports document the violations of human rights at land and sea borders, and the statistics of the number of deaths confirm the confinement of borders and the inability of safe entry. It is necessary to provide monitoring mechanisms, and promptly respond to any found legal misconduct. Additionally, it is important to ensure that there would be no legal reduction of the rights and legalizations of unacceptable, violent and dehumanizing practices.
- Redirecting the resources into the integration and measures of inclusion and securing equal opportunities, and reducing the investment in building up the borders and returning migrants to the so-called third countries. The European Parliament must play a key role in securing adequate funding for providing dignified living conditions for people immigrating to the EU, and the Member States must be required to use it as a support for that purpose during and after the next legislative period.