



On Wednesday 24 November, 27 people, including 7 women, 2 teenagers and a child, died while trying to reach the UK to build a new life after fleeing war and poverty. These deaths are to be added to the thousands of people who perish every year in our oceans, in the Channel and in the Mediterranean, in their quest for sanctuary on our continent.

These tragedies are the result of increasingly regressive migration and asylum policies.

No wall, no law, nor any institution will prevent women and men from fleeing war, terror, climate change, and hunger. Our states must provide the means to welcome with dignity those who come to our continent to seek refuge. They must uphold their legal obligation under the UN Refugee convention to allow those in fear of persecution or threats to their life to claim asylum in the country of their choosing.

Our unions in France and the UK demand that our respective governments take their responsibility to welcome these people through legal migration channels.

The criminalization of those who provide help to those in distress at sea, especially at seafarers, must stop. The international maritime conventions on rescue at sea must be abided by and applied to allow the rescue of anyone in danger.

Our unions condemn the Nationality and Borders Bill currently being considered by the UK Parliament, which would make it more difficult to apply for asylum in the United Kingdom, criminalise seafarers who rescue people at sea, and force border personnel on the coast to turn back ships, at the risk of endangering the lives of people on board.

We also condemn the EU Commission's use of the Frontex agency as it is complicit in human rights violations.

Furthermore, we demand that our governments allow asylum seekers the right to work, as well as other employment rights in order to prevent their exploitation.

It is not immigration that creates undercutting but the absence of rights for asylum seekers and migrants.

The ideals of solidarity must prevail. Our unions demand that our states do everything in their power to ensure people can claim asylum and are treated with dignity, with decent accommodation, social security and free health care.

Our unions reaffirm their determination to build a fairer Europe in which solidarity and respect for everyone's fundamental human rights prevails.