

PRESS RELEASE

## The New European Pact on Migration and Asylum violates human rights and reinforces the "Fortress Europe"

-Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid denounces that it turns human migrations into a crime despite acknowledging that they are necessary

MADRID.- The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, presented on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> in Brussels, turns human migratory movements into crimes and migrants into potential criminals who must be identified, tracked in case of absconding, detained and returned to origin countries, regardless of the circumstances by which they reached EU borders. This is what Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid denounces, which confirms that the human rights perspective has not been taken into account, as is only expressly mentioned in a footnote in the pact.

After a first analysis of the document, the organization has verified that in the Pact there is a single generic mention to "ensure the rights of migrants and refugees" and another to refugees, but includes five references to the "no right" to be on European soil. Alianza also denounces that the repeated use of the word "seamless" around migration and asylum management, with many new instruments that must be implemented in the short and medium term, only reinforces the concept of a "Fortress Europe" that not only does not improve the current failed situation, but is launched as a warning to discourage potential migrants and asylum seekers.

Data from the EU itself shows that migrants and refugees are a minority in Europe: in 2019, the EU hosted 2.6 million refugees, 0.6% of the total EU population. And 20.9 million non-EU nationals were legally resident in EU Member States, the 4.7% of the EU total population. Irregular border crossings were 142,000, compared to almost two million in 2015, at the peak of the humanitarian crisis in Europe. What the Pact does not offer are the data of the "pushbacks" to unsafe countries, such as Libya or Turkey, nor to Morocco, in this case from Spain, nor that of the thousands of migrant and refugee people deprived of their freedom, held in camps or detention centres throughout the EU.

In an international context of deep economic and social crisis, with an increase in restrictions on freedoms and rights in many countries, in which the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic coincide with the worsening of the climate emergency, it is inadmissible that the EU, which in its speeches defends global solidarity, approve measures such as the following.

- 1.- In countries of origin and transit: while acknowledging the migration complexity, the collaboration with Third countries is going to be increased to prevent people from migrating. The Pact does make it clear that the support and aid offered from the EU will be destined primarily to the main countries of "emission" and to the countries that collaborate the most with the EU in readmission and return programs; Likewise, 'European investments' are planned

in these third countries (which may entail the extraction of natural resources, instead of promoting their development); Finally, it mentions that a better use of “remittances” is necessary, on which Alianza recalls that these are sent by migrants to their families, being private transactions where the States cannot intervene. On the other hand, for this NGO, the mention of using visas to “negotiate” with Third countries that do not collaborate in returns is absolutely unacceptable.

2. A “solid” system of management of the European external border will be put in place, with an expanded European Border and Coast Guard, made up of 10,000 people, ships and other instruments, that is, a strengthened Frontex that could return to the people putting their lives at risk and, at the same time, generating new hotspots such as Moria, supposedly rapid reception and identification centres that end up leaving thousands of people in precarious limbos for years.

3. A new solidarity mechanism will be put in place between the European member states that is flexible and based on the 'sponsorship of the relocation or return' of migrants or asylum seekers, that is to say that 'border' countries (such as Italy, Greece or Spain) will receive aid from the rest of the EU countries to manage returns in the shortest possible time.

All of this comes from the same European Pact on Migration and Asylum, which recognizes the fundamental role that migrants have in the EU, where the need to attract talent from outside is highlighted, which is precisely what is required in many countries of origin. At the same time, those who hire migrants without documentation are penalized, hundreds of thousands of whom are already settled in many countries without the Pact including mechanisms for their full inclusion.

In this sense, it should be remembered that in Spain thousands of migrants in an irregular situation are responsible for a large part of the fruit collection or the care for dependent people, and have been recognized as essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this framework of social visibility, the #RegularizacionYa campaign has presented a Non-Law Proposal in the Parliament demanding their regularization.

Jara Henar, Responsible of Migration at Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid highlights: “This pact is a tremendous step backwards, which does not surprise us but which is unacceptable. It will shield the EU, increase the vulnerability and exploitation of those already here and cause a proliferation of inhumane camps like the one we have seen burning in Moria. We are living in a time when a European commitment was to be expected with those who suffer the consequences of our actions, of our pollution, of a globalization of which only the negative part reaches them, of inaction in the face of their failed governments, but has not been so. In the end, we treat migrants like criminals. ”

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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