



May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Terre des Hommes: Let's stop the massacre of children in the Mediterranean. Let's review the Dublin Regulation.**

Stop the massacre of children: Terre des Hommes requests a urgent change of route in the European migration policies in order to stamp out trafficking in human beings and save the lives of thousands of children and people fleeing war and poverty. "The intensification of the travels in the Mediterranean to reach Europe and the resulting massacres at sea are the proof of the need to start a large-range humanitarian corridor system to prevent the deaths and suffering of hundreds of thousands of people, first of all children", **Federica Giannotta** said as Head of Advocacy and Domestic projects at Terre des Hommes, an organization operating on the frontline, providing humanitarian aid, as well as psychological and psycho-social support to minor migrants.

From 2011 to date, with its FARO project, Terre des Hommes has assisted 12,000 unaccompanied migrant minors and minors arrived in Italy with their families.

**"In Libya they beat you up, even if you don't do anything wrong. I was not ready for such an intense suffering, I embarked as soon as I had the opportunity."** The stories the minors who reached Sicily in the last weeks describe dramatic experiences, particularly painful for those who are just a little more than a child. Imprisoned by traffickers in extremely crowded compounds just before leaving, victims of abuses and tortures, and deprivations of all kinds, when they reach our coasts, they are traumatized, but at the same time full of hope for the future. Hopes that often crash against a First Aid and Welcoming System, which has still too many lacks at both, national and European, level.

"As soon as they arrive, many children ask us how to reach northern Europe, where, often, they already have family members", Giannotta continues. "However, they must submit to a prolonged stay in the Italian First Aid and Welcome Centers because of the Dublin Regulation, which obligates them to request political asylum in the first country where they landed. Obviously, it is a rule that must be overcome in the interests of the minor, who must reunite to his relative as soon as possible.

The long waits for the assessment of the asylum application – combined with a reception system that often does not guarantee decent conditions – are the main reasons that drives thousands of unaccompanied minor migrants to flee their shelters. According to the data of the Ministry of Labour, on December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2015, 6,135 are the unaccompanied minors who are “untraceable”.

Today, the Dublin Regulation provides for minors the possibility to be reunited with a relative who lives in another European country. Following the legal action requires a long time, that exasperates the minors, who often prefer to restart the journey or rely on smugglers. A choice that expose them to further risk of violence and exploitation by criminal networks, and that forces them to live in inhuman conditions as it happens, for example, in Calais or in the informal camps based in Ventimiglia.

On the basis of a principle of solidarity and respect of the fundamental human rights, Terre des Hommes therefore asks the current European Reception system to be revised in light of the Cécile Kyenge’s Agenda recently approved by the EU Parliament.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/it/texts-adopted.html>

**FARO** is first emergency intervention supplying unaccompanied migrant minors and families with babies with psychological and psychosocial support. FARO is currently implemented in Sicily (province of Siracusa, Ragusa and Catania), Milan and Ventimiglia.  
The project is supported by: Fondation d’Harcourt, AMADE Mondial, Terre des Hommes International Federation, C&A, Ministry of the Foreign Affairs – Luxemburg.