

## Press Release

Associations belonging to the Tavolo Asilo Nazionale (National Asylum Board) express their considerable concern regarding [Italian] Interministerial Decree no. 150 published on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in which the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport in tandem with other Ministers declares that for the entire period of the national health emergency Italian ports will not meet the necessary requirements for classification and definition as a Place of Safety, solely in relation to rescue vessels flying a foreign flag which have rescued people outside [Italian] search and rescue waters.

The declaration appears inappropriate and unjustifiable in that, with an administrative instrument in the form of secondary legislation, international law, at a higher level, is suspended, thereby evading overriding responsibilities towards those whose lives are in danger.

Once again, the international concept of a Safe Port, confirmation of which can be found in judgments of our own judiciary, is under attack.

Whilst conscious of the complicated situation which have to tackle, it is important to guarantee respect for principles of solidarity and rescue, which should not be denied on the basis of questionable arguments as to the competency of sea rescue and the place to which people whose lives are at risk should be transported [and disembarked].

It is appropriate to underline that the Ministry of Health through USMAF<sup>1</sup> is already geared up to quarantine Ships which have rescued migrants and has already provided guidelines.

Furthermore, it is essential to emphasise that the Authority responsible for taking action in rescue is the IMRCC<sup>2</sup> which is first to receive the request for coordination and not the flag Authority.

The Associations belonging to the Tavolo Asilo Nazionale highlight the fact that, even at this moment of difficulty for Italy, Libya is a country at war and that migrants are victims of torture and slavery.

Right now, the *Alan Kurdi* is at the edge of our international waters waiting to be assigned a Safe Port by our Authority. The Associations of the Tavolo Asilo Nazionale urge the Italian government to do that without delay.

*A Buon Diritto, ACLI, Action Aid, Amnesty International Italia, ARCI, Caritas Italiana, Cento Astalli, CNCA, Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Emergency, Europasilo, FCEI, Focus – Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Fondazione Migrantes, Médecins du Monde – missione Italia, Oxfam Italia, SIMM – società italiana medicina delle migrazione*

*Tavolo Asilo Nazionale*

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<sup>1</sup> Uffici di Sanità Marittima, Aerea e di Frontiera (Offices for Maritime, Aviation and Border Health)

<sup>2</sup> Italian Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre