

Europe studies how to deal with irregular immigration

European Parliament

Lampedusa (Italy), 21.06.2023, 20:07 Time

USPA NEWS - An European Parliament delegation travelled to Lampedusa to discuss with Italian authorities and other stakeholders the challenges in the Central Mediterranean migratory route and reception conditions. Eleven MEPs of the Civil Liberties Committee held meetings with local and regional political and administrative representatives, including Mayor of Lampedusa Filippo Mannino, Prefect of Agrigento Filippo Romano, and Prefect Francesco Zito, Director for Immigration and Asylum policy at the Ministry of the Interior.

During its visit, the mission attended a Search and Rescue demonstration from the Guardia Costiera (the Italian Coast Guard) and a guided visit in the reception centre for migrants and asylum-seekers in Lampedusa. MEPs also met with representatives of the Guardia di Finanza, Frontex and NGOs carrying search and rescue operations (Sea Watch, Emergency Open Arms, Médecins sans frontières, ResQship, Mediterranean Sea), as well as international organisations, EU agencies and NGOs involved in the management of Lampedusa hotspot – notably the Italian Red Cross, UNHCR, the EU Asylum Agency, Frontex, Save the Children, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Mediterranean Hope.

At the end of the visit, the Committee Chair Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar (S&D, Spain) said: “We, Members of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, representing the European Parliament, are here to learn and to experience the situation on the ground, in terms of SAR operations and in terms of first reception in Lampedusa. We regret all loss of life at sea, including the most recent loss of at least three lives that occurred last night during a SAR operation in which forty-four persons were rescued by the Guardia Costiera.”

“We have expressed our gratitude to authorities and civil society organisations for their work in the field. We hope to use this experience to help us improve the quality of the response, both in terms of operational policy choices and EU law-making. This mission has taken place against the backdrop of the European Parliament’s work of the last three years on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which is meant to strike the right balance between fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity, which should be meaningful for Lampedusa, for Italy and for all frontline member states,” he added.

The delegation was formed by the Chair Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar (S&D, Spain), Head of the Delegation, Pietro Bartolo (S&D, Italy), Sylvie Guillaume (S&D, France), Cornelia Ernst (The Left, Germany), Nadine Morano (EPP, France), Yana Toom (Renew, Estonia), Laura Ferrara (non-attached, Italy), Karlo Ressler (EPP, Croatia), Alessandra Mussolini (EPP, Italy), Giuseppe Milazzo (ECR, Italy) and Annalisa Tardino (ID, Italy).

The European Parliament is currently engaged in negotiations with the Council on a number of files to reform the current asylum and migration legislative framework with a view to adopt new rules before European elections in June 2024.

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