

THE RUPTURE OF THE BALKANS NEAR AT HAND IN EUROPE. THE BOSNIA CASE

RETINOPERA, which was founded in 2002, is a network composed of 23 associations, movements and Catholic organizations at the national level, with approximately four million members. RETINOPERA has monitored migratory issues for some time, particularly as regards reception, inclusion and integration in various Italian and international territorial contexts. We have also benefited from the work provided by many of our associates. Via our associations, we keep a close eye on the migrant communities' daily realities in Italy while also actively following the sorrowful affairs in the countries of origin and the tormented procedures linked to the migratory chains to which refugees and migrants fall victim on the various routes.

In the last few months we could not help following the recent events in the Balkans, specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with dismay and trepidation. More than eight thousand migrants arriving from a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kurdistan and Bangladesh are suffering in inhuman conditions, staying in dilapidated shelters or even worse, left outside to survive in the woods. Other migrants and refugees are experiencing similar situations in Serbia and Macedonia. What is truly intolerable is the sight of the Croatian authorities violently pushing back the migrants and refugees, refusing them entry into their country, which is a brutal reminder of images from the past. As we are deeply troubled by this situation, the associations that make up **RETINOPERA** call for all responsible politicians and European institutions, **especially the European Parliament, to heed our call to:**

- 1. strengthen and render the Social Pillar of the Union binding, promoting the values of solidarity, dignity, social justice and the respect of human rights, searching for and including shared and sustainable solutions in order to protect and save those who suffer and die on Europe's shores; and who entrust their own life in a hope placed in our own European community;**
- 2. carry out, as soon as possible, a reform for the creation of a European asylum system that is solidary and shared by all member states, opening legal avenues of entry like humanitarian corridors: there are no alternatives, whenever a member state is under pressure, solidarity must triumph, fellow member states must agree on an equal sharing of the responsibility;**
- 3. defend the rights of the migrant minorities against all forms of xenophobia and racism, more strongly support civil society programmes aimed at integration initiatives in all of Europe.**

Regarding the moral and social unsustainability of the Balkan tragedy, we particularly recall the message of the Magisterium of Pope Francis, who during World Peace Day in 2018 stated four words of order especially relevant to the subject of migration:

- welcome and cease repatriating migrants and refugees to nations where they face persecution and violence;
- protect, because we have the obligation to "recognize and defend the inalienable dignity of those escaping from a real danger," especially as they are at risk of becoming human trafficking victims;
- promote, which means aiding in the integral human development of migrants and refugees, in particular "ensuring access to all levels of education to children and young people;"
- and integrate, so that migrants "fully participate in societal life." The Pope also warns against politics promoting a Fortress Europe, and politicians fomenting hate against those who are different.

We believe the current social and political phase in which a resurgence of nationalism and politics of hate are together fuelling feelings of resentment and selfishness are caused by the pandemic and economic crises. The disorientation and fear when confronting a complex and changing world can only be dealt with adequately by resolutely restoring values of solidarity, welcoming and respect of human rights for one and all.

They adhere to Retinopera: ACI Azione Cattolica Italiana – ACLI Associazione Cattolica Lavoratori Italiani – AGESCI – Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani – AIDU Associazione Italiana Docenti Universitari – CDO Compagnia dello Opere – CIF Centro Italiano Femminile – COLDIRETTI – Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII – Comunità di Sant'Egidio – CONFCOOPERATIVE – CSI Centro Sportivo Italiano – CTG Centro Turistico Giovanile – CVX Comunità di Vita Cristiana – FOCSIV Volontari nel mondo – FONDAZIONE G. TONIOLO – F.U.C.I. Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana – ICRA International Catholic Rural Association – MASCI Movimento Adulto Scout Cattolico Italiano – MCL Movimento Cristiano Lavoratori – MOVIMENTO DEI FOCOLARI Opera di Maria – MRC Movimento Rinascita Cristiana – RNS Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo- UNEBA Unione Nazionale Istituzioni e Iniziative di Ass.za Social

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