



## **Statement by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, High-Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on the recent incident in the Mediterranean**

Brussels, 06 August 2015

It is with great sadness that we learned of the incident that took place just a few miles off the coast of Libya yesterday.

The EU wants to commend the Italian Coast Guard, the Frontex-deployed assets and boats operated by Médecins Sans Frontières and Migrant Offshore Aid Station for their relentless efforts to save lives, today and in the past.

Though nearly 400 lives could be saved, at least 25 lives were lost in this latest tragedy. Just one life lost is one too many.

The EU is working hard to prevent these terrible tragedies. We have tripled the resources dedicated to search and rescue efforts at sea, allowing us to rescue over 50,000 people since 1 June 2015. But even if the number of people dying at sea has fallen dramatically, it is not enough and will never be enough to prevent all tragedies. We must also recognise that emergency measures have been necessary because the collective European policy on the matter in the past has fallen short.

There is no simple, nor single, answer to the challenges posed by migration. And nor can any Member State effectively address migration alone. It is clear that we need a new, more European approach.

The European Agenda on Migration we presented in May sets out this European response, combining internal and external policies, making best use of EU agencies and tools, and involving all actors: Member States, EU institutions, International Organisations, civil society, local authorities and third countries. Implementation is already underway.

From increasing our presence at sea – through our naval operations Triton, Poseidon and EUNAVFOR MED – to cooperating with countries of origin and transit – to this end we will hold a summit in Valetta in November with key African countries – to clamping down on smuggling networks, making returns more effective and showing solidarity with frontline countries, we need to tackle this challenge from all angles.

Migration is not a popular or pretty topic. It is easy to cry in front of your TV-set when witnessing these tragedies. It is harder to stand up and take responsibility. What we need now is the collective courage to follow through with concrete action on words that will otherwise ring empty.

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