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The “left-to-die boat”: actions and reactions

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

In 2011, over 1 500 people lost their lives attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Many of those deaths could and should have been avoided.

In 2012, the Parliamentary Assembly made an inquiry into one particularly harrowing case in which a small boat left Tripoli with 72 people on board and after 2 weeks at sea drifted back to Libya with only nine survivors.

The Assembly's inquiry demonstrated that a catalogue of failures led to those deaths, while several occasions were missed to save the boat in distress, better known as “the left-to-die boat”.

Since the publication of the report and Resolution 1872 (2012) of the Assembly on “Lives lost in the Mediterranean: who is responsible?” several initiatives at European and at national level have been observed. NATO promised to take the results of the inquiry into account in its Lessons Learned process for Operation Unified Protector, judicial procedures have been launched in several member States, dialogue has continued with the authorities of several member States, etc.

It is time for the Assembly to take stock and to see what progress has been made since the adoption of Resolution 1872 (2012). Furthermore, a number of questions addressed to member States who were taking part in the allied NATO action are still pending.

Unfortunately, further lives were lost at sea since then and the Assembly should define its role and that of the Council of Europe in ensuring that allegation of failure to go to the assistance of boats in distress are investigated and dealt with.

