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Protecting human rights and saving lives in the North Sea and the English Channel

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Fourat BEN CHIKHA and other members of the Assembly

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

The situation in the North Sea and the English Channel is best described as an emergency, calling for immediate action. In 2021, the number of people crossing the English Channel tripled and reached a record of more than 25 000. These are the numbers of those who successfully made the journey. The attempted Channel crossings ended tragically for hundreds of migrants and asylum seekers.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded 200 missing migrants and asylum seekers in the North Sea to the United Kingdom since 2014. In the course of 2021 at least 44 people either died or went missing and are presumed dead. According to IOM the vast majority of those drowned. Urgent action is needed to avoid a repeat of tragedies.

Migration movements in the North Sea and the Channel is a challenge for all member States and is comparable to similar situations elsewhere in Europe. The Parliamentary Assembly has drawn attention to the issue in a number of resolutions, including [Resolution 2305 \(2019\)](#) "Saving lives in the Mediterranean: the need for an urgent response".

UN agencies have stressed that intercepting boats full of migrants and asylum seekers attempting to cross the North Sea and the English Channel is not the solution to deter them. Migration policies should aim to protect, not infringe human rights. Developing safe and legal means for migrants and asylum seekers to travel to the United Kingdom and seek asylum is therefore the only way to establish an efficient and humane migration policy.

Member States should do everything possible to protect human rights and prevent the deaths in the North Sea and the Channel. The response to this emergency should be to ensure that all those who are in need of protection can effectively access it.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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