



Doc. 16341

05 February 2026

Saving the lives of migrants at sea and protecting their human rights

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2298 (2025)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2298 \(2025\)](#) "Saving the lives of migrants at sea and protecting their human rights" and has forwarded it to the Division on Migration and Refugees for information and possible comments.
2. Addressing the many challenges arising from migration is a responsibility for all member States that calls for a response based on respect for human rights, democracy, solidarity, the rule of law and international humanitarian obligations, as well as respect for the fundamental responsibility of governments to ensure national security and their sovereign right to protect their borders. This issue remains among the priority areas of the Organisation.
3. Co-operation with origin and transit countries is a crucial component of global migration and asylum governance; as stated by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which fosters international co-operation among all relevant actors on migration, acknowledging that no State can address migration alone, and upholds the sovereignty of States and their obligations under international law. Through funding, training and provision of equipment to local authorities, it is possible to enable them to address migration flows in a way that is both effective and compliant with internationally established legal standards including the European Convention on Human Rights.
4. The Committee of Ministers recalls that this issue was already addressed in Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2137 \(2018\)](#) "International obligations of Council of Europe member States to protect life at sea", and in the reply thereto by the Committee of Ministers adopted on 13 February 2019, which expressed that it is essential to promote a common, coherent and effective implementation of the legal framework for search and rescue policies in Europe and to help member States to strengthen their solidarity.
5. The Committee of Ministers notes the support expressed by the Assembly for the preparation of a new Council of Europe Action Plan on migration and refugees which may provide more assistance and guidance to member States in this field. The Committee of Ministers will bear in mind the recommendation of the Assembly when examining the new action plan.
6. The Division on Migration and Refugees closely collaborates with the Council of Europe External Offices and the North-South Centre, in order to strengthen co-ordinated actions with non-member States in its neighbourhood. Further co-operation of the Council of Europe with non-member States in its neighbourhood, notably in the field of criminal law and action against smuggling of migrants, may also be pursued through the ongoing Council of Europe Action Plan on Fostering International Co-operation and Investigative Strategies in Fighting the Smuggling of Migrants, part of which is the Council of Europe Network of Prosecutors on Migrant Smuggling.

1. Adopted at the 1549th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (4 February 2026).

