

Press Release - Lampedusa – 3 October 2014

In Lampedusa, on 2 and 3 October, the following persons were in attendance: the President of the Assembly of the Republic, presiding over the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, the President of the Italian Parliament, Laura Boldrini, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, and the Mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini.

The event was further promoted by the Portuguese Presidency of the PA-UfM.

At a meeting with the survivors of last year's tragedy and relatives of those who died, the President of the Assembly of the Republic shared a dialogue stating that institutions have a moral and political duty to address the phenomenon of migration. Furthermore, the issue of migration is one of global justice and balance between people. The issue is European, not just Italian, Greek or Spanish. "Your dignity is ours; it is one and the same," she said.

At this morning's conference, the President of the Assembly of the Republic opened her speech by saying: "I welcome the immigrants who are here, as well as the unsung heroes in attendance who saved so many of them. These unsung heroes give their very best, while we as political leaders have yet to find effective solutions for a fair world." She went on to say that "immigration is the tip of an iceberg in a changing world." This world of interactions, however, has not yet been able to give rationality and justice to human mobility. This is a call for new action, something truly new! We need a policy that focuses on causes. A systemic, across-the-board approach. We need concrete measures, new methods, and an end to a rhetorical discussion that has led nowhere." The President then read a direct account from an immigrant, in Tangier, waiting to cross the Mediterranean. She continued with the proposal of the Portuguese Presidency of the PA-UfM, recalling its past proposal (which obtained unanimous consensus) to make the issue of migration the cornerstone of its term of office. She further noted that, in Lisbon, the Portuguese Parliament had held a meeting in April which gave rise to specific proposals such as: - a tax benefit scheme for immigrant remittances (to encourage development in countries of origin); - portability of social guarantees acquired; - a

reinforcement for the humanitarian and protective side of FRONTEX, remembering that "life is more valuable than defending borders"; - a coordinated policy of real information on immigrants in countries of origin, transit and destination. The President said: "in all cases, humanitarian law must be asserted."

The President of the Assembly of the Republic underscored the need for the EU to take development policy seriously. She said that "safe and legal immigration channels must be opened to avoid a cloistered, anachronistic Europe, and international organizations must be used to sway the political elite in the countries of origin. She further stated that "Europe must be united and have a European immigration policy, which does not really exist." This tragedy is also the upshot of piecemeal EU policies." The President of the Assembly of the Republic announced that she will organize another high-level meeting at the Portuguese Parliament with the President of the European Parliament, the European Commissioner for Immigration, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Union and the entire Mediterranean basin. The idea is to draw up a list of specific measures aimed at European institutions. She ended by saying that "the tragedies in the Mediterranean call upon all of us as a moral community."