The Facilitation Directive aims to stop undocumented migrants from unlawfully entering, moving within, and living in EU Member States. It helps to fight organised smuggling rings and people who want to exploit undocumented migrants. However, the Directive also gives Member States the option to punish those who offer humanitarian assistance to these people. This could include emergency shelter, food, or medical attention.

**WHAT IS THE FACILITATION DIRECTIVE?**

1.2 MILLION

Number of migrants and refugees who arrived in Europe in 2016

4,690

Number of migrants and refugees who drowned while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea

24%

Percentage of migrants and refugees who are unaccompanied minors

470,000

Number of civilian casualties of the war in Syria, where the majority of migrants and refugees come from

**WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO CHANGE THE DIRECTIVE?**

Manuel Blanco is a Spanish fire fighter. He is part of the organisation PROEM-AID and had been volunteering on the Greek island of Lesbos since 2015. Together with the Greek authorities, he has saved the lives of countless migrants and refugees in danger at sea. But in January 2016 Manuel was arrested. Because he has been pulling drowning men, women and children to safety, he has been accused of people smuggling. Because of the Facilitation Directive, Manuel now faces up to ten years in jail.

Social Platform wants the EU to protect those offering humanitarian assistance to undocumented migrants or unaccompanied minors. This could include emergency shelter, food, or medical attention.

In cases of abuse and exploitation of undocumented migrants, systems for reporting should be developed that protect both the service provider and the undocumented migrant.

**WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?**

Social Platform wants to solve this by ensuring that people who offer humanitarian assistance to undocumented migrants or unaccompanied minors do not face punishment. This could include emergency shelter, food, or medical attention.

**WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO CHANGE THE DIRECTIVE?**

We are part of the initiative to protect those offering humanitarian assistance to undocumented migrants and unaccompanied minors. This could include emergency shelter, food, or medical attention.

In early 2017 the European Commission proposed not to revise the Directive, believing there was not enough evidence that humanitarian assistance is being punished.

Despite the Commission’s decision not to ensure protection for people like Manuel, Social Platform and our allies will continue to campaign for the decriminalisation of solidarity.

Please inform us if you have knowledge about humanitarian assistance being punished or prevented by contacting platform@socialplatform.org.

**MORE INFO:**

www.socialplatform.org

facebook.com/socialplatform

@social_platform

**Sources:** European Commission; World Economic Forum; Eurostat; UNHCR; World Vision; EASO; I Am Syria; PROEM-AID.

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