

WE ARE ON THE SAME BOAT: SEEDS OF LAMPEDUSA 2022



By PetrosTesfagiorgis

ON March 28, 2022 As part of their mission to strengthen awareness and knowledge in young people on the issues of migration and refugees COMITATO 3 OTTOBRE held a meeting at LYCEE FRANCAIS CHARLES DE GAULLE DE LONDRES on March 28, 2020 from 14.00 to 17 hours. 2 groups of students one from 14.00 to 15.30 hours and the next group from 15.30 to 17.00 hours attended.

Comitato 3 Ottobre is a non-profit organization that was born on October 3rd 2013 after the tragic shipwreck in Lampedusa where 368 refugees majority Eritreans lost their lives. Comitato 3 Ottobre dedicated that day “As a day of Remembrance at both Italian and European Level”.

M Didier Devilard the Director of the school welcomed the audience and expressed his support to Comitato Ottobre for raising their voice to end the tragedy of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea. Next Simon Mc Naught Headmaster of British Section of the school expressed his satisfaction to see young people interested in the welfare of migrants and refugees.

Professor Ernestina Meloni –acting on behalf of the Comitato Ottobre chaired the meeting and introduced the chairman of the Comitato 3 Ottobre, Tareke Berhane – from Italy. Tareke briefly explained the mission of the organization. It is to build awareness and knowledge in young people on the issue of migration, global interdependence, human rights, and cultural integration. The organization believes that education and awareness-raising on migration issues can help to change the current unfavorable European policies on migrants and refugees.

“Protect People Not Borders” is the comitato’s permanent campaign slogan, demanding the European Institutions and the General Secretariat of the United Nations for an immediate, effective and concrete commitment to prevent thousands of people from dying in an effort to seek asylum in Europe.

Some of the Achievements are enumerated below

- On March 16th 2016, the Italian Senate approved Comitato’s proposal to establish the “Day of Remembrance and Reception” at a National level.
- 500,000 signatures collected in two petitions to stop shipwrecks and deaths at sea
- 120 schools and 30,000 plus students involved in 13 European countries in the framework of the project “Europe begins at Lampedusa”.
- 3 new signed protocols at national level including with the Italian Ministry of Education for more open reception programs to promote the safety of migrants and refugees.

There was a talk from a representative of Medicine San Frontiers and virtual contribution from active members of the organization in Italy. There was a big screen in front of the audience and it is as if the activists in Italy were present in person. Although the meeting was in English there were translators to accommodate Italian and French languages facilitated by the student in the school, Marcello Romano. When my turn was due I gave a talk on the kind of support migrants, refugees and Asylum seekers get in the United Kingdom. There are well funded organizations that give support to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. For example the most prominent are Refugee Council, Migrant voice and Migrant Organize. They give advice and support for individuals in need of help irrespective from what country they come from. Side by side there are grass root organizations that provide the same support but cater only for their communities. There are Somali, Sudan, Ethiopia, Morocco, Congo and Eritrea organizations.



Petros, Tareke, Pro Ernestina Meloni and Marcello Romano

Migrants Organize initiated a campaign similar to what Comitato 3 Ottobre is doing. They have built a movement that brings change to the policy of the UK government. It is called FIRM (Fair Immigration Reform Movement). FIRM unites a call for humane immigration and inclusion policies that can truly reflect UK society's democratic values, and that draws on a distinguished history in Britain of standing for the dignity and justice of all. Many activists including myself do participate in this campaign

If Comitato 3 Ottobre with branches in 120 schools in 13 European countries coordinate its activities with UK's Migrant Organize Ltd they can collectively demand for humane policy and above all challenge the EU for paying Libya to haul thousands of people a year out of the Mediterranean Sea and put them into prisons where rape, starvation, child abuse, medical neglect, shootings and torture are rampant. They can make a big difference to the success of the campaign.

I did notice that the students are very attentive to the discussion and I expressed my conviction saying "the future is in your hands and you can shape the world. You can make a difference in promoting love and harmony and fighting for peace, justice and the welfare of the disadvantaged, the refugees and migrants.

The end

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