

**Statement by Hon. Emanuela Del Re, Minister for International Cooperation of Italy, at
the Global Refugee Forum**

17 December 2019

[Mr. Federal Councillor,
Mr. High Commissioner,]

Italy has never lost the sense of its moral responsibility towards women and men in need.

In the past years the Italian Government developed multiple strategies for refugees. We have focused especially on resettlements, humanitarian corridors and evacuations.

As regards resettlements, more than 2.500 refugees have been brought to Italy from Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Libya and Sudan to give them a fresh start in life.

As for humanitarian corridors - an Italian model and practice developed and managed by Caritas, Community of Sant'Egidio, Waldensian Table and Federation of Evangelical Churches - more than

2.400 refugees from Lebanon and Ethiopia have found a new home in Italy with a proper life project.

We have presented this model at the European Parliament last week because we are proposing to make this to become a European practice: “European Humanitarian Corridors”.

Another practice that makes me proud is the direct humanitarian evacuation of refugees from Libya. As of today, more than 800 refugees have been transferred to Italy straight from Libya. We are the only European country doing that, and I encourage other countries to follow suit.

On the financial side, in 2019 we have funded UNHCR’s initiatives, directly or indirectly, with a total of 46 million euros. For example: only a few days after the new Emergency Transit Mechanism by UNHCR was established in Rwanda last September, my Government provided the funds necessary to ensure the first transfer of refugees fleeing Libya.

For 2020, we are pledging the resettlement (which is voluntary and assisted) of a quota of 700 refugees in Italy from Niger, Libya, Lebanon and Jordan under the EU resettlement scheme. As for humanitarian

corridors for 2020, and building on the 2019 operations, Italy is pledging a transfer of 600 beneficiaries from Ethiopia, Niger and Jordan, managed by Sant'Egidio, Italian Episcopal Conference and Caritas.

In 2020 Italy is also launching its own university corridors for refugees: following the pilot project successfully carried out this year, various Italian Universities will welcome refugee students from Ethiopia and scholarships will be issued.

Moreover, our Ministry of Labor will increase its program of inclusion of refugees and migrants into the Italian labor market to up to 4.500 beneficiaries.

I would like to close my statement by addressing the dire situation in Libya. In 2020 and the years to come Italy will continue with its direct humanitarian evacuations of refugees from Tripoli.

Yet, Italy cannot be the only country to engage in this effort. A joint initiative is needed, in a spirit of shared responsibility. Therefore, I call on all European Union member States and all European Union institutions to come together to establish European humanitarian

corridors from Libya. The EU shall strengthen its commitment to ensuring legal pathways for refugees by directly involving the civil society in this effort. This will entail, on one side, the recognition of private sponsorship schemes as an effective instrument of inclusion for refugees and other vulnerable migrants, and, on the other side, the assessment of an appropriate budget for the initiative at the EU level.

All this under shared values, which I always synthesize with the concept “every person counts”.

Thank you.