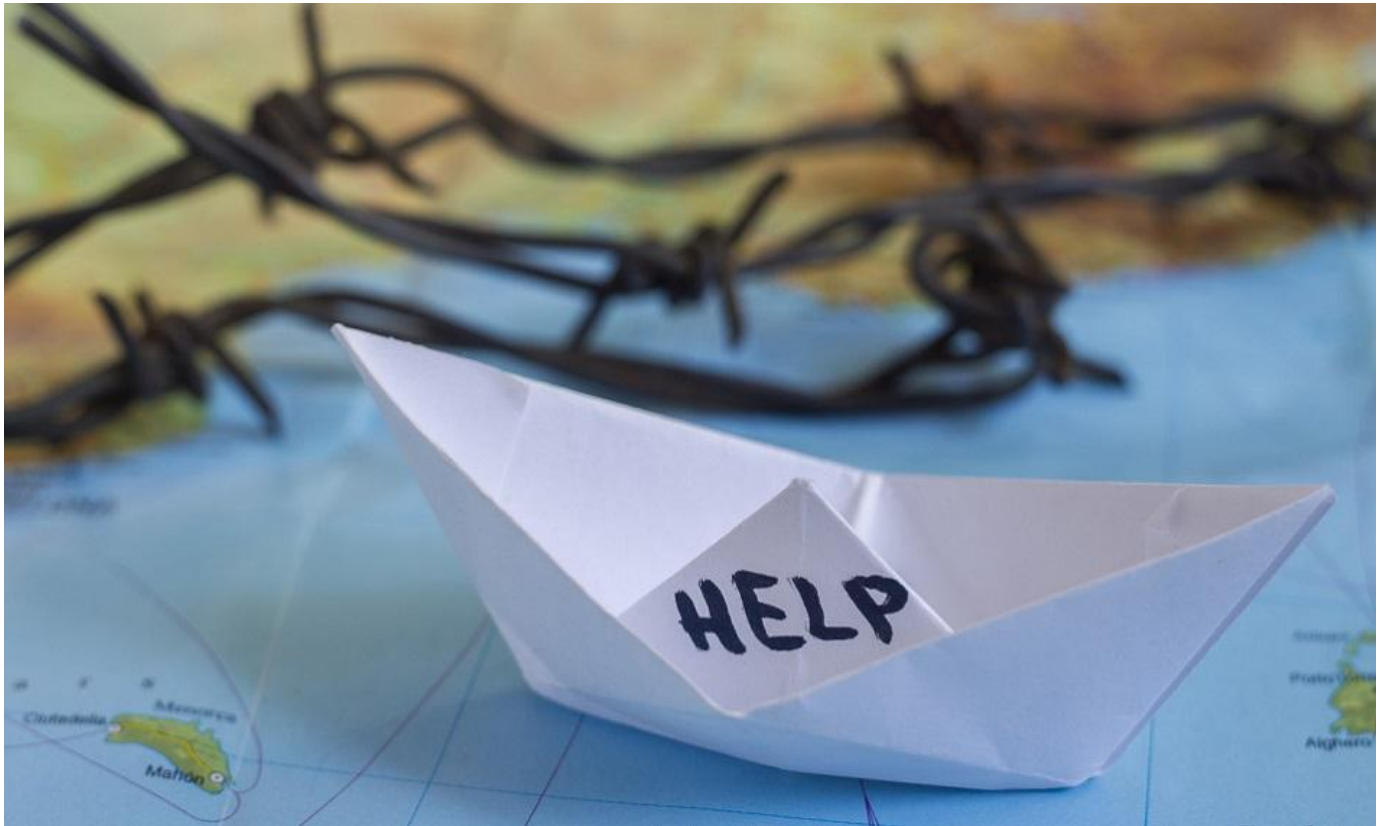


Statement of solidarity with Miguel and migrants **- Saving lives is not a crime**



(17 May 2019) EPSU and PSI stand in solidarity with their British firefighters' affiliate, FBU, in its protest against the prosecution of Spanish firefighter Miguel Roldán for rescuing, as a volunteer on a NGO rescue ship, thousands of people from drowning in the Mediterranean sea.

Italian authorities have accused Mr Roldán, alongside German and Scottish ship crew members, of aiding so-called illegal immigration and working with human traffickers. This comes under pressure from far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, who after closing Italian ports, passed a decree that curtails international humanitarian protection and reduces funding in reception facilities for migrants and refugees.

It is unacceptable that Mr Roldán is facing up to 20 years in prison for saving lives.

It is not the first time that firefighters have been charged for doing humanitarian

work, last year three Spanish firefighters were prosecuted by the Greek authorities who eventually dropped their charges.

This must end.

EPSU and PSI join FBU's call to the Italian government to drop its prosecution against Mr Roldàn and end the criminalising of rescuing drowning human beings.

Ahead of the election of a new Parliament on 26 May, we need more solidarity in Europe not criminalising human beings who seek safety and those that help them.

We reiterate our call to relaunch EU public search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean sea, in line with the International maritime obligation to save people at sea, and for solidarity between all EU member states to upholding asylum-seekers' rights.

We strongly reject politics based on racism and exclusion in Europe. EPSU has established a network, called EU care, which aims to strengthen European links, support workers in delivering a public service of hospitality that respects the dignity and rights of migrants and asylum-seekers and promote a much needed alternative, humane migration policy at European and national levels.

EPSU and PSI are proud of FBU's achievements and its commitment to solidarity with all firefighters across Europe and beyond.

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