

Ways of Europe

Lampedusa: Solidarity
for a Just Europe

Ways of Europe is committed to building a fairer, more equitable, democratic, and free Europe—starting from its symbolic and physical margins. In Lampedusa, a site of both arrival and refusal, of grief and care, we reflected collectively on what solidarity means today. This manifesto draws on local and international voices, especially those of young people, islanders, and migrants, who experience the contradictions of Europe every day.

Our shared demands and visions:

Solidarity is not charity, but justice. It must be mutual and structural—not a temporary gesture, but a constant practice that upholds everyone’s dignity. Europe’s founding values—dignity, rights, equality—cannot be applied selectively. It is in the Mediterranean that Europe’s broken promises are most visible.

We speak of people, not citizens. Rights must be guaranteed based on humanity, presence, and residency—not on papers or passports. Legal status must not define who deserves protection. We call for a citizenship reform that recognizes the rights where people live, contribute, and belong.

No securitization. No criminalization. No externalization. Migration policies based on fear and control betray Europe’s commitments to human rights. People are not “cases” or numbers. They are individuals with stories, hopes, and rights.

Freedom of movement must be for all. The right to move—to seek safety, to reunite with family, to pursue opportunities—must be upheld without discrimination, within and beyond the EU.

Recognition of shipwreck victims must be institutionalized. It is unacceptable that lives are lost and forgotten. We demand public, transparent procedures that ensure dignity for the dead and justice for their families—orphans, widows, relatives still searching for closure.

Solidarity needs time. A society always rushing to survive forgets how to care. Community requires slowness, presence, and non-productive time—playing music, telling stories, listening. We call for a universal basic income to allow everyone the freedom to engage in solidarity and collective life.

Reform the Dublin Regulation—now. A fair system cannot force border countries to carry the burden alone. We need a new European pact based on shared responsibility and human rights.

Solidarity means new narratives. Fear does not come from difference, but from how stories are told. We must replace fear with empathy. This requires education, media, and public institutions to promote shared experiences and alternative imaginaries—but also concrete solutions that show a different future is not only imaginable, but achievable.

Everyone has the right to accurate, respectful information. The way migration is portrayed in the media shapes public understanding and political choices. We demand a right to truthful, nuanced, and human-centered communication on migration and asylum, free from sensationalism and dehumanizing language. Public institutions and media outlets must be held accountable to uphold dignity and journalistic integrity. Migrants are not threats, numbers, or headlines—they are individuals with names, voices, and rights.

Lampedusa is not a periphery—it is a political center. It embodies the tensions and hopes of the European project. From here, we call for a Europe that lives up to its values, welcomes rather than rejects, and builds bridges—not walls.

Solidarity is climate, social, and intergenerational justice. Migration is often the result of climate change and global inequality. We must rethink not just how we receive people, but how we live. Solidarity also means circular economies, upcycling, and practices of care that respect the planet.

Solidarity begins from the ground up. It must be rooted in local realities and everyday life. Bottom-up strategies, led by communities and supported by civil society, should guide long-term change. Solidarity must not be a project with an end date—it must last.

Youth and children are not future citizens—they are citizens today. They must be supported not just as beneficiaries, but as role models and political actors. Let us create spaces for them to imagine alternatives, cooperate, and express shared human needs and desires.

Civil society is a democratic actor. It is not merely a service provider. Civil society organizations must be empowered through sustainable funding, participation in consultations, and platforms to share knowledge across Europe. Accountability must apply to institutions and projects alike—including awareness of privilege.

Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration Between Local Authorities and Civil Organizations. We envision a society in which local governments and civil society organizations actively seek and are encouraged to build bridges of cooperation instead of working in isolation. Mutual knowledge sharing and respectful collaboration should not be exceptions but supported and institutionalized. We call for a culture of exchange, trust, and partnership, in which the strengths and insights of each actor are acknowledged and aligned toward shared goals.

Solidarity must be protected from within. In Lampedusa, local actors report repeated rights violations by police and Frontex: arbitrary interrogations, dehumanizing procedures, photographing of children. These are not isolated incidents—they are

systemic failures. We call for independent monitoring, clear legal safeguards, and the immediate end of abusive practices. Institutions must be accountable to the values they invoke.

Build bridges between policies. Solidarity is not a sector. It must be mainstreamed across all areas—from migration to climate, education to welfare. Structural change demands coherent policies, adapted institutions, and adequate budgets. European institutions must defend and invest in the common good, including achievements like Schengen.

Solidarity must become democratic infrastructure. It should guide how decisions are made and who makes them. This means resourcing non-formal education, inclusive participation, and grassroots democracy—especially for those who are undocumented or excluded.

Solidarity benefits everyone. It is not a zero-sum game. Defending the rights of the most marginalized strengthens society as a whole. Access to healthcare, education, housing, and social protection is not charity—it is the foundation of a just community. Rights are indivisible and universal. A Europe rooted in solidarity invests in the well-being of *all*.

Migration is a mirror. How we treat those who arrive reflects the true dignity of our political and legal systems. We cannot take pride in our constitutional, European, and international principles if we fail to apply them consistently. Solidarity is not only something we owe to others—it is also a way to protect and restore the integrity of our institutions. Giving dignity to people means, first and foremost, ensuring that our systems act with dignity.

Let us build Europe together. A Europe where dignity is given to people. A Europe without imperialism and exclusion. We demand a political community that acts not just in the name of solidarity, but through it—step by step, in a path we forge together.

