

# WELCOMING CITIES FOR A HUMANE MIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY IN EUROPE

*Join the  
International Alliance  
of Safe Harbours*

*A City-Led Movement  
for Solidarity  
& Human Rights*



IN COOPERATION WITH



## We Are

The *International Alliance of Safe Harbours* (IASH) is a city-led transnational network of more than 30 European municipalities committed to protecting human dignity, promoting solidarity, and fostering a humane migration policy at all levels. As the European Union and many of its Member States intensify efforts to restrict migration—focusing on deterrence, externalization, and securitization—a growing coalition of cities is demonstrating that a different, humane approach is both necessary and viable.

As European cities and communities, we have offered a new home to asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants for decades. We are unconditionally committed to humanitarian values, universal human rights, and the right to asylum, even in difficult times. Our cities are safe places for all – including people on the move.

We advocate for a fairer European migration and asylum system and more legal migration routes by standing united in our shared values of inclusion and human rights. We advocate for a Europe without illegal pushbacks; for a Europe that protects the life of every person forced to flee, whether by sea and over land.

Our Alliance was founded at the *From the Sea to the City* conference in Palermo in June 2021. The conference was co-hosted by Palermo and Potsdam and co-organized by the From the Sea to the City (FS2C) civil society consortium.

## Key Positions We Stand For

We believe in the power of cities and municipalities as key players in shaping inclusive societies and achieving meaningful solidarity. We work to ensure our voices are heard in national and European decision-making.

### ● A RIGHT TO ASYLUM FOR ALL

Access to fair and safe asylum procedures must be guaranteed everywhere - no transit zones or closed camps at Europe's external borders.

### ● DIRECT MUNICIPAL ADMISSION

Cities shall be empowered to welcome people directly, with autonomy and support to carry out inclusive reception and integration policies.

### ● DIRECT EU FUNDING FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Local governments hosting newcomers must have access to targeted, flexible EU resources without relying solely on national intermediaries.

### ● STRENGTHENING SOLIDARITY ACROSS EUROPE

We promote fair responsibility-sharing between cities, regions, and states to ensure no community is left alone in supporting displaced people.

### ● LEGAL AND SAFE MIGRATION PATHWAYS

We advocate for pragmatic, human-centered migration pathways that respect people's dignity.

Member cities endorsed these positions in key declarations:

► *The Palermo Declaration* (2021)

► *The Villeurbanne Declaration* (2023)

## Alliance with Civil Society

We collaborate closely with the **From the Sea to the City** initiative, a European civil society consortium that aims to join forces to reimagine the European migration and asylum policies with cities and human rights at the center. With this vision, From the Sea to the City sends a strong signal to European institutions that welcoming human-rights-based migration and asylum policy is not only possible, but an obligation.

With the aim to advocate for an active role of cities in European migration and asylum policy, From the Sea to the City works to increase the visibility of welcoming municipalities at EU level and encourage other local governments to take action. Together with the cities of Palermo and Potsdam, From the Sea to the City invited European cities to the IASH founding conference in Palermo in 2021. From that moment on, the joint work with FS2C has become a defining feature of IASH. We advocate together for solidarity-based migration policies in Europe and strive to open up new migration paths to cities in Europe.

WEBSITE: <https://fromseacity.eu/>

E-MAIL: [coordination@fromseacity.eu](mailto:coordination@fromseacity.eu)

## What We Do

### ► City Conferences for Intercity Exchange and Networking

We provide space for exchange, planning, and political visibility across cities and Europe through strategic gatherings like the *Palermo Conference* (2021), *Villeurbanne Conference* (2023), *Brussels Conference* (2023) and *Berlin Conference* (2024).

### ► Webinars & Working Meetings for Knowledge Exchange

We organize regular technical and thematic sessions to support peer learning and knowledge sharing among cities and civil society. Particularly, we analyze current European policy developments on migration and asylum, monitor their implementation and assess their impact on municipalities. The upcoming implementation of the EU's new Pact on Migration and Asylum will have severe consequences on cities. IASH wants to equip cities with the knowledge and practical tools needed to understand the impacts of the Common European and Asylum System (CEAS), leverage local discretion in implementation, and uphold humane reception standards to avoid discriminatory practices.

### ► Advocacy & Policy Dialogue at the European Level

We regularly engage with EU policymakers to bring our knowledge, experience, and perspectives into European migration and asylum policy discussions. We work to ensure that cities are meaningfully included in decision-making and policy processes at national and EU-level. Migration and asylum policies must reflect the realities and needs that cities face on the ground.

### ► Partnerships with Civil Society

We strongly believe in fruitful exchange and collaboration with civil society. Together with From the Sea to the City we implement common activities, monitor policy developments, coordinate advocacy positions, and apply for project funding.

## Benefits of joining IASH

### ● STRONGER TOGETHER

Connect with like-minded cities and civil society partners across Europe to exchange knowledge, co-create innovative solutions, and activate your city's full potential in shaping humane migration and asylum integration policies.

### ● INFLUENCE POLICY, ACCESS RESOURCES

Engage in direct advocacy at the European level, contribute to policy dialogue, and potentially access funding opportunities and practical tools to strengthen your city's local strategies.

### ● VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

Raise your city's profile as a leader in solidarity-based migration through participation in joint actions, conferences, and peer learning – demonstrating that a welcoming and human-rights-based approach is not only possible, but necessary.

## Join the Alliance

Join us in our mission to build more inclusive cities and a welcoming Europe for all. As municipalities and civil society organizations we want to create a welcoming Europe based on solidarity and the dignity of every human being.

### Who Can Join?

Any city or municipality committed to human rights, inclusive societies, and fair migration policies is welcome to join.

### How to Become a Member:

1. Express your interest via email or through our website
2. Schedule a call with us so we can introduce you to our network
3. Endorse our Palermo declaration
4. Nominate one or more people in your municipality to serve as focal points with IASH and provide the contact details
5. Participate in our regular digital and in-person activities to contribute to—and benefit from—shared knowledge, visibility, and influence.

### Contact Us:

WEBSITE: <https://iash-eu.org/>

E-MAIL: [info@iash-eu.org](mailto:info@iash-eu.org)

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