

PUBLIC MANIFESTO

In defence of the Right to Asylum

From our diverse spheres of responsibility and social participation, we consider the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms imperative to justice, peace, and the coexistence of the distinct peoples of the Earth. Due to that conviction, we turn to the government, political parties, trade unions, business associations, the communication media, social organizations and finally to society as a whole to express that:

1. We assert with great concern that the tightening of European border controls and the recently enacted European Pact on Immigration and Asylum will result in serious obstacles for the protection of refugees and infringe on fundamental rights of migrant people. At present, while the government is preparing a new asylum law and a general European system for asylum is being constructed, we are convinced that Spain must fulfil its commitments to refugees, respecting their dignity and their rights in accord with all assumed legal responsibilities.

2. We believe that the new draft law for asylum, passed by the Council of Ministers on December 5th, signifies a step backwards in regards to rights and securities that have, until now, been recognized. We are especially concerned by the depreciation of the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the utilization of lists of “safe countries” and the elimination of the possibility to apply for refugee status in Spanish diplomatic delegations.

3. We support the advances made in the new asylum law, such as regulating complementary protection, or the importance of Spain’s commitment to finally participate in the UNHCR’s refugee settlement programs with an annual quota. However, these advances remain overshadowed by the global shift backwards brought about by a bill that should have undergone deeper debate and more sober reflection.

4. Legislation regarding asylum must only be modified to strengthen and broaden the safeguards that it provides, taking a stance of solidarity with displaced refugee victims in the face of new and complex struggles that batter the lives of millions of people everyday throughout many regions of our planet.

5. We ask the government and all political groups engaged in the passing of a new asylum law to honour the memory of the hundreds of thousands of compatriots that, over the course of our history, have had to go into exile and were greeted with supportive acceptance from other countries. We ask that, throughout Parliament’s discussion and processing of this bill, they would correct the deficiencies that they find and assure that the new law respects the Geneva Convention of 1951, article 13.4 of our constitution, and all the responsibilities acquired by Spain’s decision to sign onto to the international agreements and standards for the protection of the right to asylum and of human rights in general.

6. We call on you to reaffirm the values of support and respect towards refugees, and to work to construct a world in which human rights would be more than wasted ink for the immense majority of humanity. We implore society as a whole to take action in defending the right to asylum, which finds itself in greater danger every day.

Support can be sent to: manifiesto@cear.es