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The Mediterranean: border necropolitics

Blanca Garcés Mascareñas. Senior CIDOB researcher
bgarces@cidob.org, @blancagarcesmas

This article takes a historical look at how the Mediterranean has become a border based on the normalisation of death: since the shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa in 2013 to the deafening silence concerning the deaths (by omission) in the latest disaster in April 2021. During the early years, the central question was how to save lives, although the way this response was framed has changed year by year. In recent years, in a process that may have been accelerated by the pandemic, saving lives is no longer the question. The state has started to act (or not act) openly and without subterfuge, even when its actions violate their own legislation. In this context, the article ends by asking what the role of cities has been (including the city of Barcelona) and what qualities all refuge cities should have in order to be considered as such, both in the area of international politics and on a more local and practical scale.

Introduction

'The sea is full of dead bodies (…). There is no more room, neither for the living nor the dead'. These were the words of the Mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini, when 366 people died off the island's coast, on 3 October 2013. The image of hundreds of coffins lined up in an airport hanger are from that day. So are the cries of 'Murderer! Murderer!' shouted at Angelino Alfano, the then vice-president of the Italian government and Minister of Home Affairs.

Over two years later, on 18 April 2015, a fishing boat with more than 800 people on board capsized in the Strait of Sicily. 28 people survived and the rescue teams recovered 24 bodies. The others disappeared without trace. Matteo Renzi, then prime minister of Italy, called for an immediate response: 'Twenty years ago, we and Europe closed our eyes to Srebrenica. Today, we cannot close our eyes again, only to remember it later on'.

Since then, thousands of people have died in the Mediterranean. Not counting the missing, there were 4,054 registered deaths in 2015, 5,143 in 2016, 3,139 in 2017, 2,299 in 2018, 1,885 in 2019 and 1,417 in 2020. Nearly 18,000 deaths in 6 years. The latest major disaster occurred on 22 April 2021, when nearly 130 people died at some point along the route between Libya and Italy. This time, their deaths barely made the news. Neither did the fact that no official maritime rescue service was launched to help them (not from Libya, Malta or Italy), in spite of repeated calls for help.

As De Genova states (Garelli i Tazzioli, 2017: 5), in a certain way, the normalisation of death in the Mediterranean has led to its naturalisation as a border. But this is not only the naturalisation of

death. It is the indifference to these deaths and the acceptance that, effectively, the right of states to 'defend' their borders, avoiding or containing illegal arrivals, comes before the duty (of both states and individuals) to help people in danger. This latest disaster has shown, now shamelessly and without subterfuge, that those people were left to die. This is precisely what is meant by 'border necropolitics': when these deaths form part, or are considered as collateral damage, of non-arrival policies.

This article takes a historical look at how we have reached this point: since the 2013 shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa to the deafening silence concerning the deaths (by omission) caused by the latest disaster in April 2021. During the early years, the central question was how to save lives, although the way this response was framed has changed year by year. In recent years, in a process that may have been accelerated by the pandemic, saving lives is no longer the question. The state has started to act (or not act) openly and without subterfuge, even when their actions violate their own legislation. In this context, the article ends by asking what the role of cities has been (including the city of Barcelona) and what qualities all refuge cities should have in order to be considered as such, both in the area of international politics and on a more local and practical scale.

1. Maritime rescue (2014)

The first people to save lives in the Mediterranean were fishermen and the captains of merchant vessels. Vessels of the Italian coastguard arrived soon afterwards. Although their aim was border security and control, they could not elude their duty to save lives on the high seas. For example, in 1997, the Italian coastguard alleged the impossibility of returning people to Tunisia, because their duty, established in international maritime law, was to help migrants in difficulties and take them to the Italian coast. From then on, the coastguard's resources increased. Although the coastguard's purpose continued to be border control, saving lives was also one of their priorities. It was not part of the official discourse, but it was established in its regulations, and they put that into practice.

However, the shipwreck on 3 October 2013 changed politics (also in its discursive aspect) and policies. Since that day, the need to save lives became one of the main priorities. Cecilia Malmström, the then European Commissioner for Home Affairs, stated that this was not the Europe they wanted. Beyond its declarations, the Italian government responded by launching Operation Mare Nostrum, which represented a considerable increase in resources for patrolling the international waters of the Strait of Sicily.

Furthermore, Operation Mare Nostrum also involved the Italian state's return to maritime rescue operations, as it assumed a monopoly on the rescues, i.e. for coordinating operations and distributing arrivals among the various ports. It is interesting to note that this leading role for the state permitted and even encouraged the entrance of non-state players. In fact, NGOs returned to the Mediterranean under the umbrella of Operation Mare Nostrum. Under state coordination, they were able to take part in rescue operations without fear of being accused of human trafficking.

Operation Mare Nostrum lasted just over a year, from 18 October 2013 to 31 December 2014, with a final balance of over 170,000 rescued people. In spite of attempts to Europeanise it at both a political and financial level, the European Union only accepted half-heartedly. The British government was one of the main opponents, alleging that an Operation Mare Nostrum at a European level would have a pull effect and encourage migrants to risk their lives. Here the argument was turned upside-down: while saving lives was still the main theme, now it was used to justify the opposite policy. In other words, the end of rescue operations, even more controls and deporting people to countries like Libya and Turkey.

Knowing that they would not be rescued or that they would be deported immediately, who would put their lives at risk? A journalist summarised this as 'Drown an immigrant to save an immigrant',

in the British newspaper *The Telegraph*[1]. The argument is that more control and more deportations mean fewer embarkations and, therefore, fewer deaths. This was how the humanitarian discourse and border security ended up joining forces. The result was the European Operation Triton, with far fewer resources, which basically focused on border control.

2. The fight against traffickers (2015)

The second major tragedy, on 18 April 2015, once again changed politics and policies. The *mea culpa* pronounced by Jean-Claude Juncker, who was then President of the European Commission, was absolute. In a parliamentary debate, Juncker admitted that bringing Operation Mare Nostrum to an end had been a mistake, with a high cost in human lives. Consequently, he announced that he would triple the budget, to reach the level of Operation Mare Nostrum. According to him, this would re-establish 'what had been lost along the way', returning to 'normality'[2]. Not only in terms of the budget, but also intention. Frontex focused the operations on rescue and went beyond the territorial area of the member states, including international and even Libyan waters.

But the most direct result of the events of 18 April was the launching of Operation Sophia, which also aimed to 'save lives', but this time not in a 'search and rescue' mode, but rather in a 'fight and combat trafficking' mode. In the image and likeness of Operation Atalanta, which aimed to bring an end to piracy in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean, Operation Sophia's main objective was to identify, capture and destroy the boats used by traffickers.

Therefore, in a little under two years, there was a triple course change. First, protection was no longer guaranteed through rescue and disembarkation on the Italian coast, but rather by preventing migrants from leaving the North African coast. Rescue therefore began to be 'preventative', by leaving them on dry land. Second, the objective was no longer the migrants, but rather the boats that were transporting them. Third, in terms of discourse, the blame was placed on the traffickers. The argument was that destroying their vessels would save the migrants from falling into slavery. The more inhumane and savage the other side (the traffickers) were presented, the more humane and free from responsibility the European border was seen. Once again, the disjunctive between humanitarianism and border security was overcome: controlling the border and fighting against traffickers was the best way to 'save lives'.

This same focus was reinforced with the action plan against illegal migrant trafficking, which came into force in May 2015. The plan justified the fight against traffickers, not only as facilitators for illegally crossing the border, but also as exploiters and abusers of migrants. But the argument goes even further: above all, the traffickers' lack of scruples would explain the border deaths. According to the document: 'in order to maximise profit, the traffickers often load hundreds of migrants onto boats that are not seaworthy (...). Many migrants drown at sea, suffocate in containers or die in the desert'[3]. In this way, the European Union seemed to stop feeling responsible.

Things therefore went from Juncker's *mea culpa* to denouncement: from rescue to the fight against traffickers, from saving lives at sea to saving lives preventively by leaving them on dry land.

3. Outsourcing control and protection (2016)

While in April 2015 attention was focused on the route between Libya and Italy, most of the million people who entered Europe illegally during that year did so through the Greek-Turkish border. This meant that the political focus turned from the central to the eastern route. In this context, it is

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1. Read more at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11192208/Drown-an-immigrant-to-save-an-immigrant-why-is-the-Government-borrowing-policy-from-the-BNP.html
2. Juncker's speech can be viewed at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_15_4896
3. The plan can be viewed at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/libe/dv/com_com(2015)0285_/com_com(2015)0285_es.pdf.

necessary to understand the agreement between the European Union and Turkey, signed on 18 March 2016.

Legal experts insist that it was more of a press release than an agreement. The Luxembourg Court of Justice defined it as an informal agreement between Turkey and the member states, rather than with the European Council, so that in February 2017 it declared that it lacked the jurisdiction to evaluate it. These two factors turned the EU-Turkey agreement into an oxymoron: as implacable for asylum seekers it was imposed on, as insubstantial (as in almost non-existent) for courts of justice.

With this agreement, Turkey promised to readmit all the people arriving illegally at the Greek coast. In exchange, the member states accepted to resettle one Syrian citizen for every Syrian returned to Turkey. Furthermore, the European Union promised to accelerate the process for liberalising visas for Turkish citizens and increase financial aid for receiving refugees in Turkey (from €3,000 million to €6,000 million). The message was clear: those interested in reaching Greece illegally would be immediately returned, while those who waited patiently in Turkey would have the chance to enter in their stead.

The agreement failed on two of its main cornerstones: one year later, there had not been any massive deportations from Greece to Turkey (fewer than 1,000 Syrians returned), nor had legal, safe means been initiated for entering the EU from Turkey (fewer than 3,000 resettled people). The number of illegal arrivals to Greece had been reduced drastically: from 1,740 a day, a few weeks before the agreement, to 47 one month after it. In this sense, the agreement served to seal the European Union's eastern border. If leaping into the sea was still the only option for requesting asylum in Europe, how do you explain this reduction in the number of arrivals?

Because the agreement between the EU and Turkey represented one step further in the EU's policy of outsourcing migratory control. In exchange for money and the (unfulfilled) promise to reopen the visa liberalisation process, Turkey promised to control the European Union's external borders and to house the refugees that the member states were unwilling to accept. The long history of agreements between Spain and African countries, but especially with Morocco, demonstrates that outsourcing migratory control is indeed effective, basically because it is easier to prevent arrival than to return migrants once they are inside. And because these states act with greater impunity and, therefore, with greater efficiency.

But beyond outsourcing migratory control, the reduction in the number of arrivals cannot be understood without taking into account what happened within the European borders. In the months prior to the agreement with Turkey, the internal Balkan borders were progressively closed, following the example of countries such as Austria, Hungary and Germany. These border closures, together with military controls and highly-aggressive immediate, or hot, deportation, turned the corridor to Central and Northern Europe into an almost insurmountable wall.

With the Balkan route closed, Greece (until then a place of transit) became a final destination. This was especially true for people arriving after the agreement between the EU and Turkey, who witnessed how, from one day to the next, they became trapped on the islands. According to the European Commission, this geographical restriction was necessary in order to ensure their immediate return to Turkey or their countries of origin. Faced with return (which is always difficult in practice), the only alternative was to request asylum in Greece, with everything that implied in terms of long and uncertain procedures, often within a reception system that was clearly inadequate.

4. Outsourcing rescue and criminalising the NGOs (2018)

With the closure of the Greek-Turkish border, the focus (political and media) turned towards the central route, which recorded the highest number of illegal arrivals to Europe in 2016 (181,436) and in 2017 (119,369). In 2018, migratory pressure moved to the southern Spanish border, with

55,206 illegal arrivals recorded that year, compared with 23,122 arrivals in Italy and 30,706 in Greece. It is this context, especially from 2018 onwards, that we witness a double process: the outsourcing of rescue to the coastguards of southern countries and the criminalisation of the NGOs that save lives in the Mediterranean.

The outsourcing of rescue was all about reducing maritime rescue teams in Italy and Spain. For example, throughout 2018 and 2019, maritime rescue on the southern Spanish border suffered major budgetary cutbacks, a prolonged breakdown of its search radars and structural deficiencies involving rescue personnel and vessels. The lower the rescue capacity of northern countries, the more responsibilities and resources for those in the south. Therefore, in 2018, Libya regained its SAR (Search and Rescue Region) while its coastguard received training and funding from the European Union and its member states.

The logic behind reinforcing southern coastguards and reducing the capacity and responsibilities of those in the north is clear: if migrants are rescued from the south, they can be returned to the south. This is exactly what outsourcing rescue is seeking; to facilitate what a European vessel cannot do because of the 'non-refoulement' principle, i.e. return people to unsafe third countries. We could ask whether handing migrants over to southern coastguards is not an indirect way of doing the same thing. On this point, at a political and even a legal level, it is often concluded that whatever happens 'over there' is none of our business.

Along with reinforcing southern coastguards, in recent years we have witnessed the progressive criminalisation of rescue NGOs. They have been accused of 'favouring clandestine immigration' and 'collaborating with traffickers'. In the case of the central route, the NGOs have also been pursued for not collaborating with the Libyan coastguard. From this perspective, it doesn't matter who is behind the coastguard or under what conditions the rescues are carried out. It is a question of jurisdiction and now – the authorities argue – the jurisdiction is theirs.

Two examples of these accusations are the cases of the *Iuventa*, a rescue vessel belonging to a group of German activists, and the *Open Arms*, belonging to the Badalona NGO. In the former, the Italian authorities confiscated the vessel in July 2017, accusing them of working with the traffickers, having supposedly received the immigrants with the aim of taking them to Europe. In the latter, the vessel *Open Arms* was retained in Sicily in March 2018, also for promoting illegal immigration, but this time accusing them of not collaborating with the Libyan coastguard.

This criminalisation of the NGOs is not unique or exclusive to the central route or the Italian government, at that time dominated by the then Minister for Home Affairs, Matteo Salvini. In 2019, the *Open Arms* was retained in the Port of Barcelona, allegedly for technical reasons. With public opinion especially favourable to 'saving lives in the Mediterranean', the Spanish government (the same one that had welcomed the *Aquarius* a few months earlier, after it was excluded from Italian ports) retained the vessel, although without Salvini's political posturing and alleging technical reasons, with the aim of stifling the matter through administrative channels.

We stated that the NGOs returned to the Mediterranean under the umbrella of Operation Mare Nostrum to help or work under the coordination of Italian authorities. The subsequent progressive withdrawal of the Italian government and the European Union led to the NGOs gradually taking their place. While in 2015, they carried out around 14% of the rescues in the Mediterranean's central route, by 2017, that figure had risen to above 40%[4]. Since 2019, as a result of this criminalisation and with various legal processes ongoing, there are hardly any NGOs left in the Mediterranean. The sea has become a desert. All that are left are merchant vessels and the southern coastguards.

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4. 'The war of attrition that Italy is waging against the NGOs in the Mediterranean ', *El País* (15 May 2018). https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/05/13/actualidad/1526242362_443394.html

5. Island prisons on the border (2016-2021)

With the agreement between the EU and Turkey, the refugee camps on the Greek islands became black holes for basic rights. The media and the main local and international organisations have systematically denounced this: from overcrowding and winter temperatures without hot water or heating (who doesn't remember the tents in the snow), to the lack of hygiene, limited nutrition, inadequate medical assistance and high levels of insecurity in the camps. In recent years, these conditions have deteriorated (even more) given the increase in the number of arrivals and the increasingly restrictive criteria used for transferring the most vulnerable people to the continent.

This is not due to a lack of capacity or resources. According to some experts, in 2015 and 2016, Greece was the main source of the humanitarian response in this story, if we measure it in cost per beneficiary. In reality, the conditions in Turkish refugee camps are better. During these years, the Greek authorities have argued that they don't want to become the backyard of Europe, which is why they refuse to deploy a more long-lasting infrastructure. More or less explicitly, the European authorities blame it on the inefficiency of the Greek authorities. But neither of them seem very worried about it, which leads to the conclusion that they don't feel they are doing wrong: the situation in Greece has a clearly dissuasive effect on those who could arrive in the future.

Two policies are behind these border island prisons: the policy of return, where being able to apply it means retaining recent arrivals in geographically enclosed spaces, and the poverty policies, which are based on the assumption that the worse the welcoming conditions, the fewer arrivals there will be. These same policies, which are European policies, have also been applied in the Canary Islands since 2020. It is precisely these policies, and not the increase in the number of arrivals, that are causing the reception crisis in those border locations.

We said above that the agreement between the EU and Turkey failed in its return policy. Most of the people who arrived in the Canary Islands in 2020 and 2021 have not been returned either. Among other things, these low percentages are due to the fact that the countries of origin and transit don't always cooperate (even when there is an agreement). Furthermore, there are currently two more reasons for not doing so: first, the restrictions on mobility, imposed because of the pandemic – we are thinking about Morocco, for example. And secondly, an increasingly indignant population that is starting to blame the authorities for their silence and their responsibility for the deaths. The most recent and obvious example is Senegal.

The other feature that characterises these island prisons are the policies of poverty which tend to turn the reception systems into authentic black holes for basic rights. Legal assistance and the right to the protection of refugees and minors often fail. The reception conditions also fail. This is not a minor issue. The 'Directive on the revised standards of reception' (Directive 2013/33/EU)[5] obliges member states to guarantee standards that 'provide applicants with a suitable standard of living that ensures subsistence and the protection of their basic physical and psychological health (Article 17.2).

Lastly, these containment policies not only affect the immigrants, but also the population as a whole. The misery of those who live (poorly) in the camps also ends up affecting the lives of those who are living outside them. With the feeling that the EU government has abandoned them, the latter tend to blame all of their problems on the immigrants. It is a war between the poor and the forgotten. It is a conflict without end, given that the solution is not in either of their hands. Even though this happens in geographical margins, there are no contention policies that work here, given that, sooner or later, their effects (in the form of votes for the extreme right wing) reach the geographical centre.

In this regard, Lesbos, Samos, Ceuta and Melilla – and now the Canary Islands, too – all have in common that they are contention areas on the external borders of the European Union. Beyond

5. Accessible at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0033&from=ES

retaining immigrants, these ‘island cages’ – as Ana Oramas, the Coalició Canària MP at the Spanish Parliament, called them – contain many of the crises that are currently affecting Europe: the demographic crisis of an empty or emptied Europe that expels its young people; the economic crisis of those areas affected by deindustrialisation or globalisation processes, which are often excessively dependent on the monoculture of tourism; the political crisis of a general public who feel neglected by their political representatives; and lastly, the migratory crisis, which may be the least serious, but at the same time it is the most visible, and consequently migrants tend to become scapegoats for all the others. Undoubtedly, these are too many crises for such a small space.

6. The brazen border (2020)

Since 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Greek government has stopped looking for subterfuges. They definitively took off their mask and started operating with a bare face. In February of that year, the Greek government decided on a brutal response to those people who were trying to cross the border in the River Evros area. At the beginning of March, Athens decided to suspend the right to asylum. These unprecedented measures were justified in two ways. Firstly, they employed the old argument that illegal entry justifies illegal return, i.e. without having to guarantee such basic rights as access to international protection. Secondly, these measures were also justified using the logic of war. Brussels accused Erdogan of using refugees as a weapon of war, but did not hesitate to legitimise the Greek government’s brutal response in the same way: ‘I thank Greece for acting as the shield of Europe’, said Von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission at the end of her visit to the area. Without the chance of requesting asylum, the migrants became targets that were easily ‘arrestable’ and ‘deportable’. Fear of the pandemic also made it possible to justify what had previously been unjustifiable: from the closure of refugee camps to the withdrawal of the NGOs providing humanitarian aid.

In August of the same year, various media outlets reported the news (with strong proof) that the Greek government had abandoned dozens of refugees at sea in floating tents, expecting the Turkish coastguard to return them to Turkey. In breach of international law, as they had not been given access to asylum procedures. They had been embarked and abandoned at sea, under the cover of night and at the hands of people wearing masks. These are illegal practices of a Greek state that has definitively lost all shame. Behind the Greek government, we once again find the European Union. Based on graphic material and emails from various sources, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* denounced the involvement of Frontex in various of these immediate, or hot, deportations.

In 2020, along with these hot, illegal and brutally conducted deportations, there was also news about deaths in the central Mediterranean due to the omission by the coastguards of the nearest countries. As we said above, the shipwreck of 21 April, with 130 deaths, is the most flagrant example. Neither Rome, nor La Valletta nor Tripoli responded to their pleas for help. A Frontex aircraft is said to have approached, but it did not send any warning message. The *Ocean Viking*, a humanitarian vessel belonging to the French organisation SOS Mediterranée, and three merchant vessels went to their rescue. However, by the time they arrived, it was too late. They were only able to recover 13 bodies.

In short, five years after the badly named ‘refugee crisis’, the violation of basic rights doesn’t seem to give anyone pause for thought. Faced with the disjunctive of which comes first, the right to life (and a decent life) or the right of states to defend their own borders, the balance seems to have tipped towards the latter. It doesn’t matter how many reports denounce something which is not only morally reprehensible, but also absolutely illegal. It seems that the states do not care, such is their feeling of impunity. It is no longer necessary to pretend. The illiberality of the so-called *liberal democracies* is now undeniably evident.

7. And where are the cities in all of this?
In 2015, with the arrival of over a million asylum applicants, during the refugee-reception crisis in Europe, many cities assumed a predominant role. Although asylum is entirely a matter of national jurisdiction, the saturation of reception systems led many local administrations to launch alternative services. Many Italian cities, for example, developed local policies to respond to the presence of asylum seekers on their streets, either because they were in transit to other countries or waiting to formalise their applications or, having done so, hadn't met the necessary criteria for entering the state reception systems.

In other cases, solidarity actions carried out by the general public preceded the policies. For example, in Berlin, over 150 initiatives for receiving recently-arrived refugees were created. In these cases, local administrations tended to assume coordination roles among the various citizen initiatives. The relationship was not always easy: over time, the citizen initiatives were displaced by public services and recognised social organisations, with a definition of who could be assisted and to what degree, which was often much more restrictive.

But since 2015, cities – those that proclaimed themselves to be *refuge cities*, and evidently not all of them are; they may even be a minority – took an important step: while up until that moment municipalities had dedicated themselves to managing their cities, developing policies that were more or less within their jurisdiction and more or less aligned with national policies, in the context of the 2015 reception crisis, some cities started to confront their national governments, also in the area of border politics and policies. For example, in August 2015, the Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, denounced the European Union and its member states for their 'shameful policies' and called insistently for cities to have a more important role in the policies for receiving refugees.

With regard to the deaths in the Mediterranean, some cities denounced their own governments and offered their ports (symbolically, as it was not within their jurisdiction) to humanitarian rescue vessels that did not have permission to disembark. For example, throughout the spring and summer of 2018, Italian cities like Palermo and Naples denounced the policy of the Italian Minister of Home Affairs, Matteo Salvini, against the maritime-rescue NGOs, and other cities such as Barcelona and Valencia called for the Spanish socialist (PSOE) government to open their ports. These are examples of how, in recent years, some European cities have become political subjects, this time also in matters of border control and migratory policies.

Barcelona has been especially active in denouncing deaths in the Mediterranean and supporting Open Arms, the maritime-rescue NGO. For example, in 2019, the City Council signed an agreement with Open Arms to finance their rescue operations in the central Mediterranean (with nearly €500,000). At the beginning of 2021, Barcelona City Council joined the Open Arms case against Matteo Salvini, who ordered the blockade of the rescue vessel during the summer of 2019, when it had 130 shipwreck survivors on board. Together with Open Arms, the City Council claimed economic and moral damages.

8. And would cities do any better?
In this context, to what extent do or could cities represent an alternative? To what extent, as Benjamin Barber says (2013), would cities do things better? Due to their nature, cities are different.

Firstly, the nation state governs a territory while cities govern their people. While the national community coincides with the national territory, making the defence of borders a defence of '*us*', cities are, by definition, places with a high level of mobility. Cities don't have borders. A city is a group of people that live together at a certain moment in time.

Precisely because of that, and this is the second difference, the urban general public is, by definition, more inclusive. They are people who live in a city, regardless of their origins, their belongings and, often, also their roles. Although the concept of *citizen* is, by definition, exclusive — it includes those inside and excludes those that remain outside—, urban citizens blur the limits.

Lastly, cities are also different when we speak about security. While migratory policies are justified by fear of the '*other*' and the defence of one's own security above the security of others, cities know through their own experience that long-term security can only be constructed by the inclusion of everyone. Inclusion is the flip side of security, as exclusion ends up being the flip side of conflict.

But how can these differences form the basis of a new paradigm for the global governance of migrations? Externally, it is necessary to build a real alliance of cities that goes beyond political posturing and the branding of each city on the international stage. Internally, it involves a real social policy that attenuates inequalities and combats exclusion. Only then can we stop cities from becoming the breeding ground for xenophobic discourses. We should not forget some exclusive tendencies shown by some local authorities: in France and Italy many cities have started to exclude foreigners and European citizens from certain social services; in Spain, some city councils make it difficult for illegal immigrants to officially register as city residents.

It is only through a real social policy that cities can become a refuge, not only for those that are to come, but also for those that are already here. Cities that expel, cities that forget about part of their citizenry, cities that abandon, can never be refuge cities. They can declare it, they can make it a political question with their states.

But without '*social policies'*, there are no 'politics' worthy of the name.

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