

# Risks, Rights & Safety at Sea



Central  
Mediterranean  
Sea

## From Libya to Italy

Update 12/2017

WTM-Alarm-Phone



+33 486 51 71 61



**F**reedom of movement is a basic human right! The right to escape and to leave a country is explicitly guaranteed in the Article 13 of the UN-convention. But the EU-governments have established a restrictive visa-regime to prevent the arrival of most people from poor and conflict-ridden countries. People, who nevertheless seize their right to migrate to Europe, are forced to use illegalized and dangerous routes.

The unjust EU laws are responsible for the deaths of more than 30.000 people since the end of the 1980', turning the Mediterranean Sea into the deadliest border in the world. Together with the relatives and friends of the victims of this border regime we accuse the EU-governments and authorities of this crime! We also criticize the governments in North-Africa for their collaboration as watch dogs of the EU.

This document aims neither at deterring nor encouraging people from attempting the dangerous crossing. It provides objective information about risks, rights and vital safety measures to take at sea.

### **Emergency Contacts of Coast guards in Italy and Malta**

Italy: +39 06 592 3569 · Malta: +356 21 25 72 67



### **When you decide to leave, read this:**

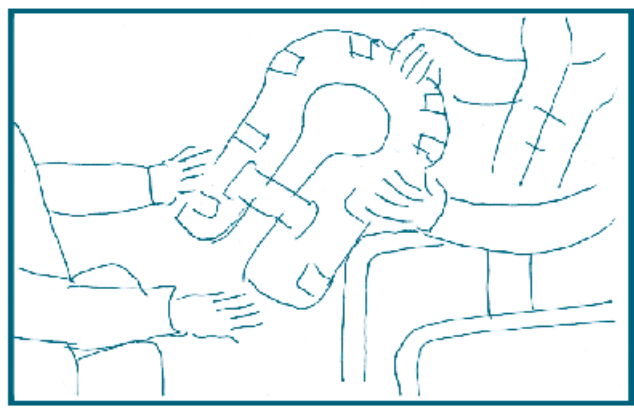
Are you sure you want to put your life at risk when crossing the sea? You must be conscious of the risks that you will be exposed to when making up your mind. Hundreds of people die each year trying to cross the Central Mediterranean sea. In 2017, more than 3000 deaths were recorded, but the real numbers are certainly higher.

### **Illegal Immigration Offence**

Legal entry into the EU territory requires a visa, without which migrants are criminalised. Unauthorized departure may also be criminalized and after being intercepted, people might end up in prisons, or they have to quickly travel to relatives and friends in other European cities.

**T**he following information will not make the crossing safe, but it might save your life. You might also find yourself in situations in which you can't follow these suggestions. But this flyer does give you ideas about what to expect and how to prepare. When you organize in groups and prepare for the crossing, you may be better able to influence the decisions made.





## Life vest and important belongings

- If possible buy or organize life vests on board for everybody! Make sure that it is a life vest of good quality. Put them on as soon as your boat is leaving and wear them all the time.
- If possible take a small backpack with water and food and wear several layers of clothes.
- As your personal belongings might get lost or stolen, make copies or take photos of anything important such as documents that you might need as evidence in your asylum case and send them to friends and relatives on facebook or via email.

## Navigation and Communication Equipment

- Try to make sure that a GPS and a satellite phone (Thuraya) is in the boat.
- Take along the Coast Guards numbers.
- Take along numbers of relatives and friends and if possible let them know about the exact time and place of departure and give them the numbers of rescue services and of the Watch-TheMed (WTM) Alarm-Phone.

Write the numbers of relatives, Coastguard and Alarm-Phone on your lifevest or your body.

## Warning signals

Make sure that there are emergency and warning signals on board! For lack of better, anything likely to attract other people's attention can be useful: whistles, lightly colored clothes, plastic bags, mirrors, metal/aluminium, mobile phones flashes, etc.

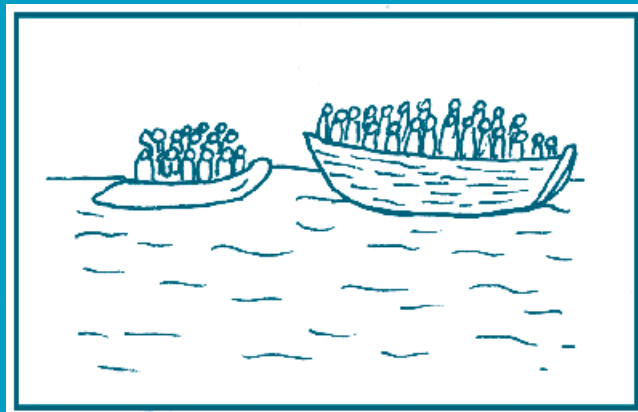
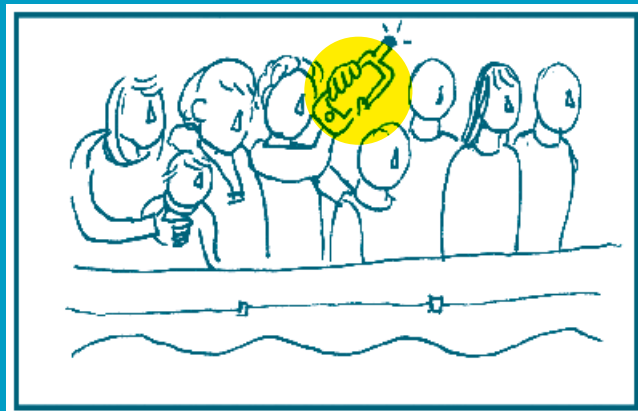
## Weather Forecast

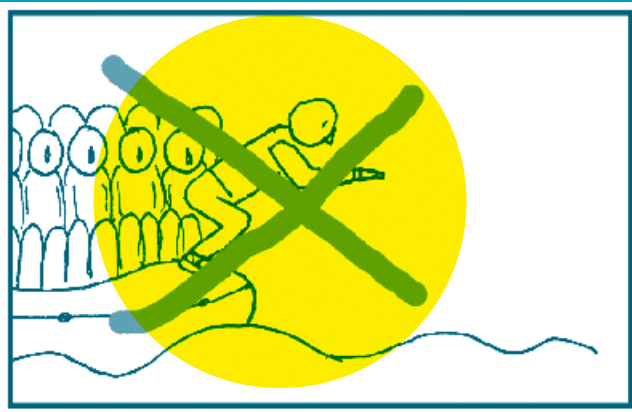
Check that the weather is good for the next three days at departure and destination points. Check online: [www.windy.com](http://www.windy.com)

## Do not overload the boat

We are well aware that relations with smugglers may make security requirements impossible. But try to avoid an overloaded boat.

**Attention! The usual boats to migrate to Italy are currently not good enough to reach Italy. If you start a journey on these boats, please be aware, that you will get into distress and need to be rescued.**





## Precautions at sea

- Try to keep your clothes as dry as possible.
- Drink little bits of water, regularly! Don't ever drink sea water!
- In case of bad weather, hold on to ropes or any other fixed parts of the boat.
- Gas oil mixed with seawater can burn your skin.
- Do everything to keep the balance! Keep calm and don't panic, no matter what happens!
- Avoid conflicts at any cost! Panic on board can put yourself at risk: people can fall off the boat, and the boat can capsize.
- Do not consume alcohol or any kind of drug before and during the trip!
- Do not light any fire in the boat to attract attention, the whole boat may burn down!

### Emergency Contacts in Central Mediterranean Area:

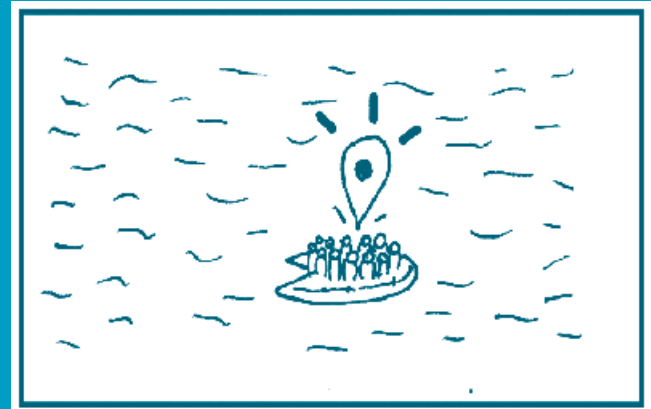
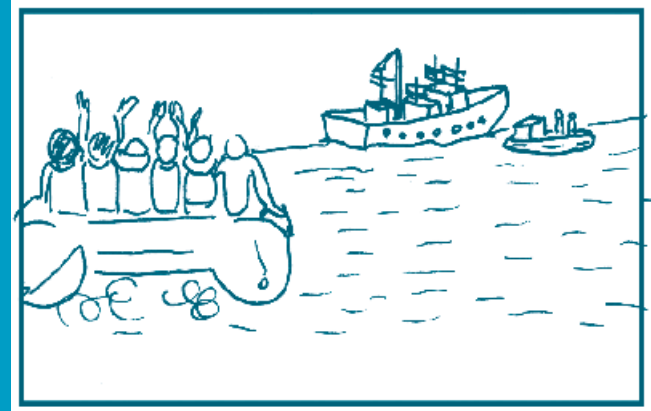
Italy: +39 06 592 3569

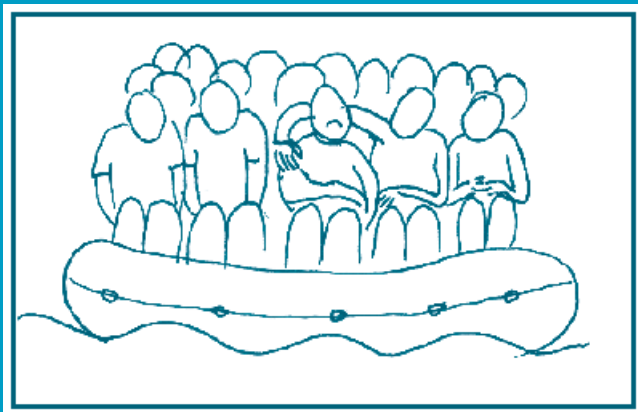
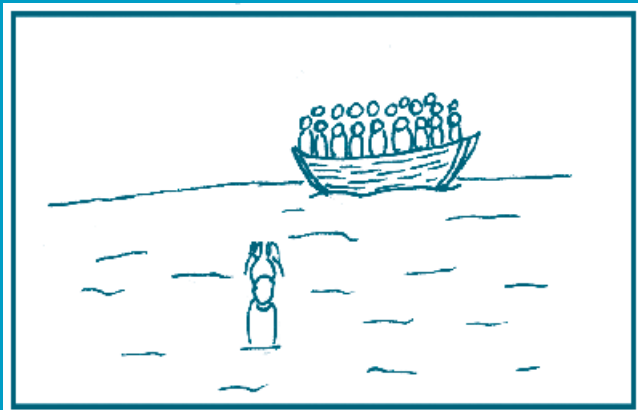
Malta: +356 21 25 72 67

Tunisia (Ministry of Defence): +216 71 56 02 40

## Emergency and Distress

- If you are in immediate danger (for example if the sea is too rough, if your boat broke down or got lost, if someone fell off the boat), call all emergency numbers that you have immediately.
- If you spot other boats or planes around, ask them for help with all means: by waving clothes, by shouting, whistling, by flashing your mobile phones or any other electronic device.
- Try to find someone on board who can speak the language of the coast guards or English. Keep calm. Specify to them that: you are in distress, your GPS location, the number of people on board, the health conditions of all the passengers, the number of men, women and children, as well as the size, the type and the condition of the boat (any water leaking? Is the engine running properly?).
- To have access to your position with a Thuraya satellite phone, proceed as follows:  
**menu – navigation – current position.**
- Contact the WTM Alarm-Phone: **+33 486 51 71 61**. This number is not a rescue number but an alarm number to support rescue operations (see also last page).



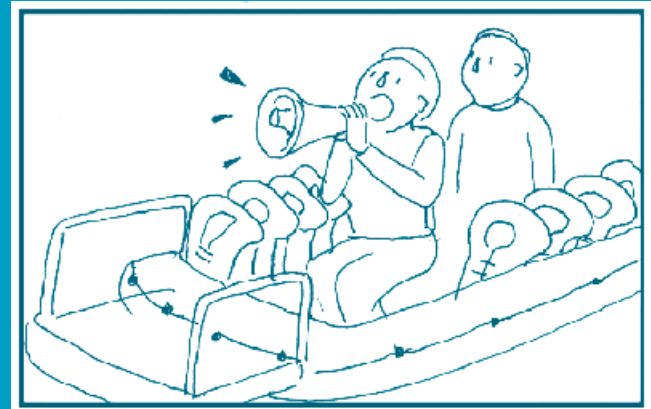
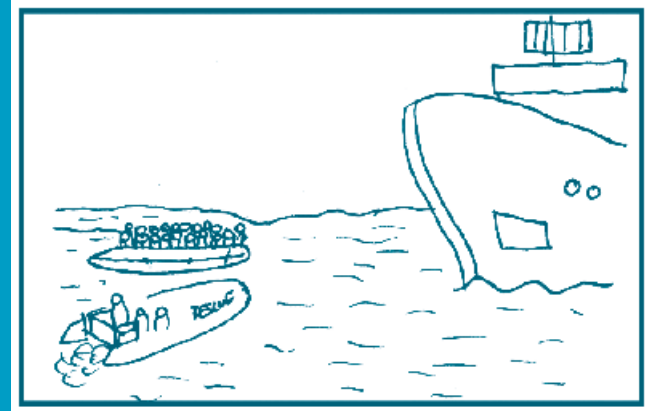


## Someone overboard or sinking

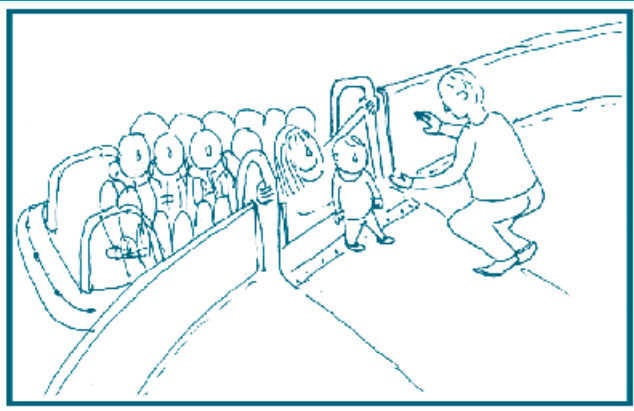
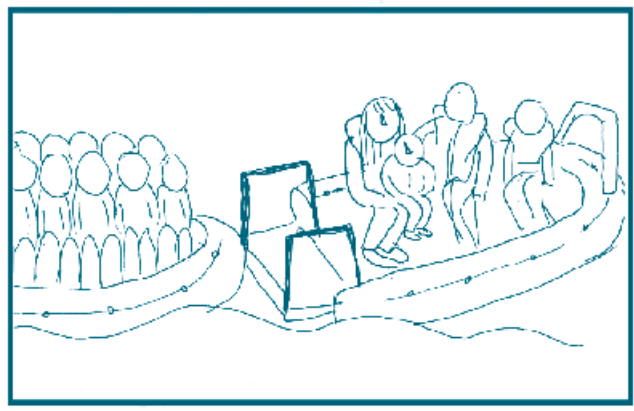
- If somebody falls into the water, stop the boat immediately. Do not lose sight of this person until he or she has been rescued! Throw a life buoy, life vest or any other floating object next to this person as soon as possible. Do what you can without risking your own life – call immediately the rescue numbers you have.
- An individual in the water with a life vest must float in a foetal position – like a ball to retain the body's heat – or on her/his back. If several people fell overboard, try to stay together. Also try to stay close to the boat.
- Try to get the person back into the boat, but maintain stability of your boat at all times.
- When the person is back on board, take his/her clothes off, dry him/her and wrap him/her around in a blanket.
- If the entire boat has capsized, try to hang on to it, or to any floating parts.

## During rescue:

- If a ship approaches for rescue: Keep calm!
- Remain seated and do not make any sudden movement in the boat, this could make it capsize.
- Never jump into the water and do not try to swim to a rescue boat.
- Be quiet and listen to the announcements of the crew.
- Some people may translate the announcements of the crew in more languages, so everybody understands what is happening.
- Tell the rescuers, if you have any people who need fast help, i.e. unconscious people, small children and pregnant woman.
- If you get close to the rescue ship, stop your engine. Do not try to dock alongside the rescue ship.
- Usually smaller rescue boats will bring and distribute life vests first to everybody and then they will shuttle step by step all people to the big boat.
- First children and people with severe health problems will be transferred, afterwards women and finally all men. Please keep calm and follow the orders of the rescuers!







Illustrations by Carolina Cruz aka Lucilux

All European ships are obliged to transport you to a safe harbour in Europe!

### On the rescue ship

If you wish to ask for asylum, say it clearly. The captain rescuing you must make sure that you have access to an asylum procedure if you ask for it, and to take you to a harbour in a safe country where you will not be threatened.

On some rescue boats you might be interviewed by authorities about the route and the situation in the boat. Be aware that an identified driver of the boat will be probably criminalized and might be imprisoned in Italy for many years as he is often accused to be part of the smugglers.



## Once on the mainland

Asking for asylum: You have crossed a border without authorization, which is forbidden according to law. But the 1951 Geneva Convention underlines that you have the right to asylum when you are persecuted for your race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. You can also try to ask for asylum even when you don't belong to one of those categories. If this is what you want, you must tell the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the authorities (including the police if you cannot find any other representative) about it, and insist on your right to asylum. You can also ask to get in touch with relevant organisations to seek help and advice.

Asylum seekers in Italy can use the following free number (only working in Italy):  
**800 90 55 70** (ARCI).

If you are a minor under 18 tell this immediately to the captain or authorities when rescued!

For a detailed list of organisations in Europe and information about asylum procedures, visit the following web pages: **www.w2eu.info**



## Report any death or violation of your rights

If people died on your boat, or if you were in distress and a boat failed in its duty to rescue you while aware of your situation, you can get in touch with a local organisation defending migrants and demand that your testimony will be heard. Or you can write to **info@watchthemed.net**.

WatchTheMed (**www.watchthemed.net**) wishes to collect your testimony in order to support you, and others who may face similar situations in the future. Try to give as many details as you can, send any picture or video of the crossing. Your identity will not be revealed, your testimony will be kept anonymous.

WTM-Alarm-phone



+33 486 51 71 61



# WatchTheMed-Alarm-Phone

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This number is not a rescue number but an alarm number to support rescue operations. We created this number together with activists from different transnational networks who are in solidarity with migrants and refugees. We don't have boats or helicopter to carry out rescue operations, so please make sure you first call the coast guard. What we can do is follow up on their response, making known to them that we are informed and "watching" them. If you are not promptly rescued or if you are being pushed back, we will inform the media and protest against this.

The printing of this flyer was kindly supported by:



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