



ROSARNO, REGGIO DI CALABRIA, Call for appeasement measures respectful of Human rights

Brussels, 11 January 2010

The European association for the defence of Human rights, AEDH, joins forces with the Liga Italiana dei Diritti dell'Uomo, LIDU, to ask that Italian authorities take the vital appeasement steps necessary to re-establish a constructive dialogue between the authorities in charge of public safety, the local population and immigrants living in the town of Rosarno (Reggio de Calabre).

Over the last few days, violent immigrant demonstrations have been taking place, following injuries inflicted onto two immigrants by an unknown party using air rifles. There followed serious tensions, a response from the local population which led to clashes. Racist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant words were uttered during these events. Property was damaged and people were injured during these demonstrations.

AEDH insists on emphasizing that it is the State's duty to uphold the law, and that the law in a democratic society applies to everybody, whatever their origins. It is also up to the State and its leaders to make sure that racist and xenophobic acts are not tolerated, and to fight against their development. Those attitudes, namely the rejection of immigrants, can only increase the tensions and lead to more uncontrollable excesses. The Italian Home Office Minister stated that « illegal immigration has been tolerated for years now, without any attempt at controlling it, and this has fuelled both organized crime and a situation of intense degradation, as seen in Rosarno. »¹. He bears a heavy responsibility. Such a statement can only be condemned.

As inexcusable as the riots are, causing property damage and injuring people, still the fact remains that for many years, in the region of Rosarno, immigrants, whether legal or illegal, have been for the most part exploited by the labour mafia. They are in their vast majority employed in the agricultural sector. They are paid very low wages, and their living and sanitary conditions are degrading. These workers must be given back their rights and dignity, and it is imperative they find support in the State.

AEDH supports the LIDU to state that those immigrants did not come to Italy to create trouble. They came to find hope and a better future. They are but victims fleeing the endemic poverty of their home countries.

AEDH will follow with particular attention the measures that the State and its representative, the Country Commissioner of the Reggio de Calabre, will take. AEDH will only approve these measures if they are taken with the approval of all parties involved. These measures will have to respect the people concerned by these problems, and conform to the guidelines for the fundamental rights, as recognized internationally and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

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The **European Association for the Defense of Human rights (AEDH)** is an umbrella organisation that brings together leagues and associations defending human rights in EU countries. It is an associate member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). For further information: www.aedh.eu

ⁱ As quoted by the Italian newspaper La Repubblica , dated 8 January, 2010