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THE POSSIBILITIES OF SAVING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, BY SHIPS OWNED BY THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the possibilities of saving illegal immigrants, on the Mediterranean Sea, by the non-governmental organizations. The number, structure, equipment and legal determinants of using the ships owned by the organizations were evaluated.

Key words:

Non-governmental organizations, rescue ships, illegal immigrations, Mediterranean Sea

INTRODUCTION

The problem of mass illegal immigration across the Mediterranean Sea is seen primarily through the prism of the number of people who make their way to Europe, and in the media of those who lost their lives during this exodus. The approach to non-governmental organizations is similar, practically without reflection on what means of carrying out their activities, namely rescue ships. The aim of this study is to determine the possibilities of these vessels in the context of their number, construction, equipment, method of obtaining and legal conditions, the more so that the source materials do not contain any information on this subject, even on the websites of non-governmental organizations conducting such activities, which is reflected in the text. Filling this gap will allow for a rational assessment and understanding of the effects and mechanisms of action in this area.

This study lists in alphabetical order all known organizations involved in rescuing illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea, together with a description of their rescue vessels, the basic data of which are summarized in the table at the end of the study.

CADUS

It is a German non-governmental organization based in Berlin, working closely with Sea-Watch. It has small units that are rubber pontoons with semi-rigid hulls, about which there is little information in the sources. Only two rescue boats have been identified, flying the flag of Germany. The first, called "Rezai", operated at the turn of 2016/17¹⁶⁹. In March 2016, another RIB cutter was introduced, named "H.E. Thomsen", in honor of two members of the Danish WWII resistance movement who helped many people fleeing to Sweden. The admission ceremony took place in Berlin, and Syrian YouTube star Firas Alshater was godfather¹⁷⁰. In 2017, or 2018, the organization gave up active activities by these units, and limited itself to supporting other organizations, mainly Sea-Watch and LifeLine, in the field of knowledge, equipment, and finances¹⁷¹.

DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Doctors Without Borders is an international non-governmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2015-17, it used the ship "Dignity I", which was built by the Shimoda shipyard in Japan in 1973 as a unit serving the "Alegrete" oil rigs. In 1982, it was sold to a Brazilian company in Salvador, and in 1990 to Sunset Shipping on the Isle of Man, and converted into the Seaboard Swift patrol ship. In 1995, it was purchased by Hornbeck Shipping in Douglas and renamed "Hornbeck Swift", in 1997 as "Swift" by Tidewater Marine (Northsea) in Den Helder, and in 1999 by Rederij West Friesland in Den Helder, it changed its name to Swift 1 and was converted into a seismic vessel. In 2004 he joined Telco Marine in Den Helder, and then to the Vroon Offshore Service under the name "VOS Southwind". In 2010 the Rederij Groen was sold and its name was changed to "Furore G.". In 2015, the ship was sold to the organization Doctors Without Borders and under the name "Dignity I" in 2015-17, with a crew

¹⁶⁹ *Rezai*, <https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:4439165/mmsi:211719020/imo:0/vessel> [21.1.2020].

¹⁷⁰ *Lifeboats instead of warships! - Sea-Watch and CADUS launch new speedboat in Berlin*, <https://www.cadus.org/en/article/lifeboats-instead-of-warships-sea-watch-and-cadus-launch-new-speedboat-in-berlin> [21.1.2020].

¹⁷¹ *Support CADUS - Search and Rescue Mission - Mind 'n' Rescue*, <https://www.betterplace.org/en/projects/35982> [21.1.2020].

of 8, saved illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean basin. In 2017, the ship was taken over by Sea Watch and changed its name to "Sea-Watch 3", replacing the previously used "Sea-Watch 2"¹⁷².

The organization also used the ship "Bourbon Argos" flying the Luxembourg flag. The unit was a supply tug for oil rigs, built in 2013. For a short time it was called "Bahtera Aman" and sailed under the flag of Malaysia. The vessel ceased operations in the Mediterranean Sea in August 2017.

The organization's branch in Belgium uses another oil rigs supply tug, "VOS Prudence", built in 2012 in Fujia (China). There are rooms for 14 crew members and 38 additional seats¹⁷³.

JUGEND RETTET

Jugend Rettet is a non-governmental organization founded in 2015 by a group of pupils and students in Berlin, with the aim of saving illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The organization uses the ship "Iuventa", whose name comes from the Roman god of youth and courage, which is to emphasize the age and determination of the owners of this vessel.

The "Iuventa" was built in 1962 at the Scheepswerf Vooruit shipyard in Zaandam (The Netherlands) as a fishing vessel. Its first name "Maria" was changed to "Waterman II" in 1969 and then to "Jonas" in 1971. In 1990, the ship was converted into a unit used for the construction of offshore wind farms and the name was changed to "Telco Suez". At the end of 2001 it was resold and renamed "Alk Explorer". In 2016, the ship went to the Jugend Rettet organization and in June this year was adapted by the Emden shipyard in Germany to rescue shipwrecked people¹⁷⁴, and above all, to receive 100 people taken from the sea¹⁷⁵ and operated under the Dutch flag¹⁷⁶. By 2017, he had saved around 14,000 migrants in 15 missions¹⁷⁷. In August of that year, Jugend Rettet refused to sign

¹⁷² *Na verkoop herdoopt*, http://koopvaardij.blogspot.com/2015/09/na-verkoop-herdoopt_17.html [26.10.2019].

¹⁷³ *VOS PRUDENCE (3231)*, <https://www.vroon.nl/Files/VesselParticulars/VOS%20PRUDENCE20190412122815.pdf> [21.1.2020].

¹⁷⁴ *Our Story*, official site Jugend Rettet, https://jugendrettet.org/en/about#our_story [4.10.2019].

¹⁷⁵ *About us*, official site Jugend Rettet, <https://jugendrettet.org/en/> [4.10.2019].

¹⁷⁶ N. Miller, *Italy seizes NGO boat suspected of aiding people smuggling*, „The Courier”, 5 August 2017, <https://www.thecourier.com.au/story/4835151/italy-seizes-ngo-boat-suspected-of-aiding-people-smuggling/?cs=5> [4.10.2019].

¹⁷⁷ *About us*, official site Jugend Rettet, <https://jugendrettet.org/en/> [4.10.2019].

the code of conduct for NGOs set up by the Italian government¹⁷⁸, which on August 2, the Italian authorities detained the ship in the port of Lampedusa, and the organization was accused of cooperating with smugglers¹⁷⁹.

LIFEBOAT

It is an organization based in Germany. It has the rescue ship "Minden", which is a former rescue ship built in 1985 and based until May 1989 on the island of Sylt. A characteristic feature of "Minden" is the possibility of dropping the "Margareth" boat directly into the water (dimensions 6.9x2.3x0.67 m, powered by a 165 HP engine, which gives it a speed of 17 knots) along with the handling, which significantly shortens reaction time during a rescue operation¹⁸⁰.

MEDITERRANEA SAVING HUMANS

It is an Italian non-governmental organization rescuing illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The project is supported financially and organizationally by activists from the German Sea Watch Association. The former Mare Jonio tugboat built in 1972 by the shipyard Cantiere Navale M & B Benetti in Viareggio, flying the flag of Italy, is used for this purpose. On May 10, 2019, the ship was detained by Italian ships on the charge of assisting illegal immigration and directed to Lampedusa. However, the prosecutor in Agrigento rejected the preventive confiscation of the ship requested by the Italian Minister of the Interior due to lack of evidence¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁸ *Seenotretter wollen keine bewaffneten Polizisten an Bord*, „Tages Anzeiger“, from the 2nd of August 2018, <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/ausland/europa/seenotretter-lehnen-verhaltenskodex-ab/story/21466869> [4.10.2019].

¹⁷⁹ ***Das würde das Ende der zivilen Seenotrettung bedeute***, „Der Tagesspiegel“ from 4 April 2019, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/kampf-einer-kapitaenin-gegen-die-italienische-justiz-das-wuerde-das-ende-der-zivilen-seenotrettung-bedeuten/24180112.html> [4.10.2019].

¹⁸⁰ *SRK- MINDEN 23,3m Klasse auf Sylt*, <https://rc-powerboat-team-schleiden.jimdo.com/dgzrs-orginal-srk-minden-srk-eiswette/> [21.1.2020].

¹⁸¹ F. Albanese, *Le due navi che Hanno salvato imigranti sono arrivate in Italia. La Mare Jonio sequestrata*, La Stampa from 11 May 2019, <https://www.lastampa.it/cronaca/2019/05/10/news/le-due-navi-che-hanno-salvato-i-migranti-sono-arrivate-in-italia-la-mare-jonio-sequestrata-1.33700955> [23.10.2019].

MISSION LIFELINE

Mission Lifeline is a non-governmental organization founded in Dresden in May 2016¹⁸². It used several ships to rescue illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The first is "Lifeline", which previously belonged to the German organization Sea-Watch and was called "Sea-Watch" and from March 18, 2016 "Sea-Watch 2" and at the beginning of summer 2017 was sold or donated to Mission Lifeline¹⁸³. In June 2018, it attracted public attention, both for its activities in the Mediterranean Sea and for the problem of whether it has the right to use the Dutch flag¹⁸⁴. The reason was the statement of the Italian Minister of the Interior, Salvini, who demanded that the rescued persons be transported to the Netherlands. However, the representative of that country in the European Union stated that the vessel had not been registered in the Netherlands¹⁸⁵, despite being de facto registered with the Koninklijk Nederlands Watersportverbond Water Sports Association. However, there was no entry on this in the Dutch ship register, so he was not certified. The Dutch government stated that it saw no possibility of accepting migrants¹⁸⁶. This resulted in the decision of the Italian Minister of Transport to seize the ship for a review of the registration¹⁸⁷. Malta also raised objections to the vessel's operations. Malta's Prime Minister J. Muscat announced that against the German captain "Lifeline" C.P. Reisch, a preliminary investigation is launched as activists apparently repeatedly disabled the transponder during rescue operations that transmits the ship's position, raising suspicions that they were operating illegally in Libyan waters¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸² *Dresden-Balkan-Konvoi startet zum 2. Mal*, „Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten“ from 12. 11.2015, <https://www.dnn.de/Dresden/Lokales/Dresden-Balkan-Konvoi-startet-zum-2.-Mal> [23.10.2019].

¹⁸³ *Vergangene Mission Sea Watch 2*, <https://sea-watch.org/das-projekt/sea-watch-2/> [25.10.2019].

¹⁸⁴ *Migrantenschiff staat geregistreerd bij Nederlands Watersportverbond*, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2237816-migrantenschip-staat-geregistreerd-bij-nederlands-watersportverbond.html> [23.10.2019].

¹⁸⁵ *Italien will Schiffe deutscher Flüchtlingshelfer beschlagnahmen*, „Die Welt“ from 22.06.2018, <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article178006948/Italien-weist-erneut-Schiff-mit-Migranten-ab.html> [25.10.2019].

¹⁸⁶ P. Kuhn, *„Wenn man so will, ist die ‚Lifeline‘ vogelfrei“*, „Die Welt“ from 1.07.2018, <https://www.welt.de/politik/fluechtlinge/article178560282/Kieler-Seerechtsexpertin-Rettungsschiff-Lifeline-ist-vogelfrei.html> [25.10.2019].

¹⁸⁷ *Italien will Schiffe deutscher Flüchtlingshelfer beschlagnahmen*, „Die Welt“ from 22.06.2018, <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article178006948/Italien-weist-erneut-Schiff-mit-Migranten-ab.html> [25.10.2019].

¹⁸⁸ *„Lifeline“-Besatzung erhebt Vorwürfe*, „Tagesschau“ from 28.06.2018, <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/lifeline-131.html> [25.10.2019].

Quite mysterious is the second unit of this organization called "Eleonore". The ship's photos show that it sails under the flag of Germany and its home port is Hamburg. It too has problems landing rescued illegal immigrants ashore. Despite the ban on entry to Italian and Maltese ports. On September 2, 2019, a ship with over 100 migrants moored in Sicily, where it was immediately detained¹⁸⁹.

MIGRANT OFFSHORE AID STATION (MOAS)

The humanitarian organization Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) based in Malta was founded in 2013 by a couple of millionaires Ch. and R. Catrambone, inspired by the appeal of Pope Francis. It provides assistance (including medical assistance) to refugees and migrants around the world¹⁹⁰, although the area of operation was practically only the Mediterranean Sea.

For statutory purposes, it purchased the vessel "Phoenix" (some sources suggest that the vessel is actually called "Phoenix 1"), which was built in 1973 by Davie Shipbuilding in Lévis (Quebec, Canada) as the fishing trawler "GC Bassin". In 2002 it changed its name to "Pattam" and in 2007 to "Phoenix" and was used as a research and training vessel under the flag of the Marshal Islands¹⁹¹. Upon purchase by MOAS, it was registered under the Belize flag. The crew consisted of 16 people divided into teams. The medical team provided health care, logistic took care of the migrants during their stay in "Phoenix", and public relations supported media activities, primarily in the context of acquiring donors¹⁹².

At the stern there was a landing site for two Schiebel Camcopter S 100s UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle), intended for patrolling the sea surface around the ship. These are small aircraft with a rotor diameter of 3.4 m, a fuselage length of 2.09 m, a width of 1.24 m and a height of 1.04 m. The take-off weight is about 200 kg, and the payload of 25 kg carried by them, with which the apparatus can

¹⁸⁹ *Migrantenschip staat geregistreerd bij Nederlands Watersportverbond*, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2237816-migrantenschip-staatgeregistreerd-bij-nederlands-watersportverbond.html> [23.10.2019].

¹⁹⁰ *Good samaritans launch mission to save migrants in the Mediterranean*, „The Guardian” from 16.07.2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/16/couple-launch-mediterranean-migrant-search-project> [18.6.2019].

¹⁹¹ *PHOENIX I - IMO 7234272*, <http://www.shipspotting.com/gallery/photo.php?lid=2099056> [27.6.2019].

¹⁹² *MSF Medical Team Concludes Work With Migrant Offshore Aid Station in Mediterranean*, Doctors Without Borders, 23.9.2015, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/what-we-do/news-stories/news/msf-medical-team-concludes-work-migrant-offshore-aid-station> [21.6.2019].

stay in the air for 6 hours. The AE-50R engine with a power of 40.4 kW provides it with a top speed of 220 km / h, cruising speed of 102 km / h. and a ceiling of 5.9 km¹⁹³.

The first "Phoenix" mission began on August 25, 2014, and by the end of the year, around 3,000 illegal immigrants were helped. In the following year, until December 2015, this number increased by another 9,000 people.

The second purchased ship, "Topaz Responder", was also used in rescue missions¹⁹⁴. At the stern there were two rescue boats, located and lowered by a deck crane, named after the Kurdish brothers "Aylan" and "Galip".

PROACTIVA OPEN ARMS

The organization was founded in October 2015 in Badalona (Spain) by A. Camps. Before that, it operated under the name of Pro-Activa Serveis Aquàtics, as a company providing emergency services¹⁹⁵. Originally on the Greek island of Lesbos from September 2015, its activity was to help migrants arrive safely from the boats to the shore¹⁹⁶.

The first ship of the organization was the luxury sailing yacht (ketch) "Louis Gnillo" flying the British flag, which was handed over to the organization in July 2016 by its owner L. LoMonaco, a Milanese businessman, known as the king of latex mattresses and renamed "Astral"¹⁹⁷.

At the end of 2016, the former Malta-registered "Golfo Azzurro" fishing trawler, built at the Visser Den Helder shipyard in the Netherlands in 1987 as

¹⁹³ Schiebel. *Unmanned Air System*, CAMCOPTER S-100 Brochure,

https://www.schiebel.net/downloadBrochures/CC_GER/index.php [21.6.2019].

¹⁹⁴ *Topaz Responder*, https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/hips/shipid:3088726/mmsi:434127400/imo:9544293/vessel:TOPAZ_RESPONDER [22.6.2019]

¹⁹⁵ R. Mackey, *As More Children Drown, Volunteers on Lesbos Say Rescues Are Left Largely to Them*, The New York Times from 29.11.2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/30/world/europe/as-more-children-drown-volunteers-on-greek-island-say-rescues-are-left-largely-to-them.html> [28.6.2019].

¹⁹⁶ R. Minder, *Saving Refugees on the Mediterranean: a Luxury Yacht With a New Purpose*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/world/europe/mediterranean-refugees-astral-yacht.html> [28.6.2019].

¹⁹⁷ *Astral: Las otras vidas del yate salva-inmigrantes de Évole*, „El Mundo” from 16.10.2016 roku, <https://www.elmundo.es/cronica/2016/10/16/58020de746163f7b588b4651.html> [23.10.2019].

"Maarten Cornelis", was put into operation¹⁹⁸. In 2010, it was leased by the Golfo Azzurro Foundation and renamed to its current name with the simultaneous flag of Vanuatu with its home port in Rotterdam. In the same year, it supported the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's campaign to protect whales from being caught in the area of the Danish Faroe Islands. Using the funds of the Brigitte Bardot Foundation¹⁹⁹, the ship stayed there until August 17, when it was detained, and then departed under the escort of the Danish frigate "Triton"²⁰⁰.

Then it came into the possession of the Dutch Boat Refuge Foundation (BRF), which in June 2016 was invited by the Golfo Azzurro Foundation to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. It was flagged under the Panama flag, and the foundation chartered the vessel for a symbolic price. In December 2016, the organization rented the ship as BRF ceased its activities²⁰¹. By August 2017, the Golfo Azzurro had saved over 8,500 people.

In November 2017, the Libyan coast guard ship, base number 654, fired warning shots at "Golfo Azzurro" and ordered the search to be stopped, and departure²⁰². Upon its arrival in Sicily, it was detained by the Italian authorities, and his captain and two others were accused of trafficking in human beings. However, on April 16, an Italian court ordered the ship's release²⁰³.

The "Open Arms" was built as a rescue tug in 1974 in Spain as "Punta San Ignacio". After changing the name to "Ibaizabal Tres"²⁰⁴ became part of the Spanish Maritime Rescue, and after decommissioning it was donated to the Proactiva Open Arms organization by the Ibaizabal Group. After the reconstruction, it was registered under the Spanish flag with the home port of Bilbao²⁰⁵. The electrical system, electronics, lighting and galley were renovated.

¹⁹⁸ GOLFO AZZURRO – Search & Rescue Vessel, <https://www.vesselfinder.com/pl/vessels/GOLFO-AZZURRO-IMO-8505721-MMSI-373753000> [1.7.2019].

¹⁹⁹ One of the organization's ships was named "Brigitte Bardot" in gratitude for their financial support. Por. *Our Fleet*, https://seashepherd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/SSCS_Fleet.pdf [10.1.2020].

²⁰⁰ *Golfo Azzurro*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golfo_Azzurro#cite_note-sfpa-2 [1.7.2019].

²⁰¹ *NGO Ships Smuggling Muslims From Libya Into Europe*, <http://hlao1980.blogspot.com/2016/12/ngo-ships-smuggling-libya.html> [10.1.2020].

²⁰² *Libyan Patrol Boat Fires Warning Shots at Rescue Ship*, „The Maritime Executive from 14.11.2017, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/libyan-patrol-boat-fires-warning-shots-at-rescue-ship> [1.11.2019].

²⁰³ *La Fiscalía de Ragusa recurre la liberación del barco de rescate de Proactiva Open Arms*, https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/Fiscalia-Ragusa-ONG-Proactiva-Open_0_765024790.html [23.9.2019].

²⁰⁴ *IBAZABAL TRES*, <https://www.baixamar.com/buque.php?id=250>, [4.11.2019].

²⁰⁵ J. Triana, *La oenegé Proactiva Open Arms cambia el 'Astral' por un barco más grande para el rescate de inmigrantes*, „elPeriodico” from 21.12.2016, <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20161221/la-oenegé-proactiva-open-arms-cambia-el-astral-por-un-barco-mas-grande-el-rescate-de-inmigrantes-> [23.9.2019].

In addition, toilets, dining rooms, cabins and emergency rooms have been adapted to accommodate 6 crew members and volunteers to drive two on-board fast rescue boats. In addition, on an area of over 100 m² on board, if necessary, it can accommodate 100 people, and in the maximum variant even up to 400²⁰⁶. Additional equipment consists of 2 semi-rigid cutters²⁰⁷.

In March 2018, it entered Pozzallo, Sicily, where it was seized²⁰⁸. A month later, on April 16, 2018, the ship was released as Libya was not considered a safe place for the repatriation of migrants²⁰⁹.

PROEM AID

It is a Spanish organization that rescues illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean Sea and uses the ship "Alan Kurdi", which was put into operation in October 2018. The ship's name comes from the name of a 3-year-old Syrian boy who drowned while trying to cross the sea and was found on a Turkish beach. His photo spread around the world and he became a kind of icon of the suffering of illegal immigrants while trying to get to Europe by sea²¹⁰.

The ship was built in 1956 in Rostock and was to be handed over as war reparation to the Soviet Union, however, it eventually served as a research vessel in the former East Germany. Initially it was called "Joh. L. Krueger", and from 2010 "Professor Albrecht Penck" and was an exhibit of the German Maritime Museum, from 2013 of the Krebs Group in Rostock. The crew consisted of 10 people, and in addition, 9 to 11 people of medical staff could be taken on board.

²⁰⁶ *Proactiva Open Arms estrena buque insignia para sus rescates en el Mediterráneo*, elPeriodico from 20.06.2017 roku, <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20170620/proactiva-open-arms-estrena-embarcacion-que-se-suma-al-golfo-azul-en-los-rescates-en-el-mediterraneo-6117549> [1.7.2019].

²⁰⁷ S. Duval, *El remolcador «Ibaizabal Tres» ya fue bautizado como «Open Arms»*, „La Voz de Galicia” from 5.04.2017, https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/coruna/2017/04/05/remolcador-ibaizabal-tres-bautizado-open-arms/0003_201704201704051491383254634.htm [1.7.2019]; .

²⁰⁸ *La Armada libia amenaza con "disparar a matar" al barco de Proactiva Open Arms*, https://www.lasexta.com/noticias/sociedad/la-armada-libia-amenaza-con-disparar-a-matar-al-barco-de-proactiva-open-arms_201803155aaabaca4f1cd b0d2.html [23.9.2019].

²⁰⁹ I. Camilleri, *Migrant rescue ship released by Sicilian authorities*, „Times of Malta” from 20.04.2018, <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/migrant-rescue-ship-released-by-sicilian-authorities.676717> [1.11.2019].

²¹⁰ *Manipulacja w sprawie uchodźców? Zdjęcie martwego dziecka na plaży to "ustawka"*, <http://www.polishexpress.co.uk/steruja-nami-w-sprawie-uchodzcow-zdjecie-martwego-dziecka-na-plazy-inscenizacja> [7.6.2019].

It sailed under the flag of Germany, which was to achieve the highest level of legal security and support the German government. The ship started its first mission on Christmas 2018. Currently it is probably not used²¹¹.

Proem Aid also used the ship "Life", which from 2017 to 2018 under the name "Seefuchs" belonged to the Sea-Eye organization (and was described in more detail there), and the Proem Aid organization was handed over in 2019.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

"VOS Hestia" is a unit rented by Save the Children, which works with the Italian Coast Guard. It is a former oil rigs supply vessel built in 2009 in Fuzhou (China). Initially, it was called "BBC Hestia" and sailed under the flag of Singapore. It is currently registered in Italy with its home port in Ancona²¹².

SEA EYE

Sea-Eye is a German non-governmental organization founded in 2015 in Regensburg, which picked up over 14,000 illegal immigrants from the sea. It had the ship "Seefuchs" obtained from the Museum in Greifswald (Germany), where it acted as a museum facility. The ship was built at Elbwerft Boizenburg in Germany and entered service in January 1959. As "Heringshai" with the home port of Sassnitz. In 1993 it was sold and renamed "Seefuchs" and moored permanently as a museum ship in the port of Greifswald, and from 2014 in Stralsund²¹³.

In March 2018, with 218 immigrants on board, it was stuck in the Italian port of Pozzallo, where prosecutor C. Zuccaro accused the crew of refusing to hand over the migrants to the Libyan coast guard, thereby allowing illegal immigration. As the ship's captain stated, it also resulted in the fact that of the 19 crew members, more than half returned home²¹⁴. Transport Minister Toninelli announced the seizure of the vessel for a registration review as the Dutch Representation to the European Union stated that they are not registered in the

²¹¹ *Unsere Schiffe*, <https://sea-eye.org/unsere-schiffe/> [12.11.2019].

²¹² *VOS Hestia*, <https://www.balticshipping.com/vessel/imo/9529061> [21.1.2020].

²¹³ *Geschichte*, <http://www.seefuchs.de/geschichte/> [1.11.2019].

²¹⁴ *'My crew saved 218 migrants from drowning – so why are we the enemy?'*, „The Guardian” from 24.03.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/24/proactiva-open-arms-rescue-boat-saved-from-drowning-mediterranean-migrants> [1.11.2019].

Dutch registers²¹⁵. On November 19, 2018, the Dutch flag was changed to German²¹⁶. The ship was handed over in March 2019 to the Spanish organization Proem Aid and changed its name to "Life".

Another ship of the organization is the "Sea-Eye", a twin of the "Seefuchs". It was put into service on May 4, 1959 as the SAS 320 Sternhai and operated until 2014²¹⁷. It was used by the organization until the fall of 2018, when it was taken out of service due to engine damage and moved to Malaga²¹⁸.

The organization also operated a Ribtec RIB called "Speedy" equipped with two external diesel engines giving it a speed of up to 45 knots (83 km / h). It was detained on 9 September 2016 by Libya's Coast Guard, and confiscated²¹⁹.

SEA-WATCH

It is a German non-governmental organization founded on May 19, 2015 by H. Höppner in order to save refugees in the Mediterranean Sea.

In 2015, the organization purchased the "Clupea" vessel, built in 1968 at Hall, Russell & Company in Aberdeen for the British Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Scotland, where it was used as a research vessel. After the reconstruction, the crew consisted of 16 people. In January 2016 it was renamed "Sea-Watch" and registered under the Dutch flag. On March 18, 2016, its name was changed to "Sea-Watch 2", and in early summer 2017 it was decided to sell it and buy a larger one – "Dignity 1". The standard stay of the ship at sea lasted 2 weeks, after which it had to replenish supplies and disembark people taken from the sea. It is estimated that over 25,000 people passed through its deck²²⁰.

In 2017, it took over the ship "Dignity I" from the organization Médicins Sans Frontières, changing its name to "Sea-Watch 3", which replaced the smaller

²¹⁵ *Italien will Schiffe deutscher Flüchtlingshelfer beschlagnahmen*, „Die Welt“ from 22.06.2018, <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article178006948/Italien-weist-erneut-Schiff-mit-Migranten-ab.html> [1.11.2019].

²¹⁶ V. Vu, *Malta lässt festgesetztes Schiff "Seefuchs" frei*, „Die Zeit“ from 23.11.2018, https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2018-11/zivile-seenotrettung-mittelmeer-fluechtlinge-seefuchs-malta?fbclid=IwAR2Zs7MKgbyAe2CMFKm_NmKC9v_QHKZuAZ6QfwZ7XWOPF6bRnl8jtPxZEzlk [1.11.2019].

²¹⁷ *Die Organisation Sea-Eye*, „Ostsee Zeitung“ from 11.12.2017, <https://www.ostseezeitung.de/Nachrichten/Wirtschaft/Seewirtschaft/Die-Organisation-Sea-Eye> [1.11.2019].

²¹⁸ *Die "Sea-Eye 2" ist in See gestochen*, „Süddeutsche Zeitung“ from 5.12.2018, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/fluechtlinge-sea-eye-mittelmeer-seenotrettung-1.4238538> [1.11.2019].

²¹⁹ *Die Schiffe*, sea-eye.org/die-schiffe [12.11.2019].

²²⁰ *Vergangene Mission Sea Watch 2*, <https://sea-watch.org/das-projekt/sea-watch-2/> [25.10.2019].

"Sea-Watch 2"²²¹. This enabled activists, the Catholic Church and the Die Fantastischen Vier music group to raise nearly EUR 475,000²²². It was registered as a yacht in the Netherlands, but in June 2018 it was detained by the Maltese authorities in the port of Valletta because it was not properly registered under the Dutch flag²²³. In mid-May 2019, "Sea-Watch 3" with 47 people on board, despite the lack of consent from the Italian authorities, entered Lampedusa, where it was seized²²⁴. However, on June 1, it was released²²⁵.

SOS MÉDITERRANÉE

It is a humanitarian organization based in Marseille, France, dedicated to saving lives at sea in the Mediterranean Sea north of Libya using the ship "Aquarius". It was founded in June 2015 by former German captain K. Vogel and French S. Beau, and works closely with the organization Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).

The organization's vessel "Aquarius" is a former German coastguard service vessel "Meerkatze" (II) (Küstenwache) in operation since December 9, 1977. After decommissioning on 1.5.2009 under the name "Aquarius" under the flag of Gibraltar, it sailed as a research vessel for renewable energy, oil, and gas industry and served in this capacity until the end of 2015. From February 2016, it was chartered and operated for the SOS Mediterranee organization as a ship rescue service for migrants from Libya to Italy²²⁶. For this reason, on August 6, 2018, the Maritime Administration of Gibraltar issued a notice of the removal of "Aquarius" from the register of ships under its flag, as it was registered as a research facility, but used as a rescue²²⁷. On August 10, 2018, attempts were

²²¹ *Na verkoop herdoopt*, http://koopvaardij.blogspot.com/2015/09/na-verkoop-herdoopt_17.html [26.10.2019].

²²² *Dank Fanta 4 – Mission Lifeline bekommt ein neues Rettungsschiff*, „Die Welt“ from 17.10.2019,

<https://www.welt.de/vermishtes/article182267956/Seenotrettungsorganisation-Dank-Fanta-4-Mission-Lifeline-bekommt-ein-neues-Rettungsschiff.html> [23.10.2019].

²²³ A. Evelt, R. Thelen, "Sea-Watch 3" hat alle Zulassungen - darf aber nicht auslaufen, „Der Spiegel“ from 1.08.2018, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/malta-sea-watch-3-hat-alle-zulassungen-darf-aber-nicht-auslaufen-a-1221076.html> [26.10.2019].

²²⁴ A. Scarano, La Sea Watch con 65 migranti a bordo. Salvini: "Non avvicinatevi all'Italia", „Il Giornale“ from 15.05.2019, <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/sea-watch-65-migranti-bordo-salvini-non-avvicinatevi-1695205.html> [26.10.2019].

²²⁵ J. Seisselberg, Salvini auf Crashkurs mit der Justiz, „Tagesschau“ from 21.05.2019, <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/salvini-seawatch-justiz-101.html> [27.10.2019].

²²⁶ *Aquarius in Valencia: Spain welcomes migrants from disputed ship*, BBC News from 17.06.2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44510002> [23'9'2019].

²²⁷ *Aquarius Dignitus*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquarius_Dignitus [24.9.2019].

made to register "Aquarius" under the Vatican flag without success²²⁸. At the end of August 2018, the organization successfully applied for registration of the ship in Panama, where on 1.9.2018 the ship was renamed "Aquarius 2", but sailed under the German flag²²⁹. However, on September 22, 2018, the Panamanian Maritime Office announced the initiation of the procedure for removing the ship from its register on the basis of information received from Italy that it violated international law²³⁰. In September, attempts were made to register the vessel in Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Venezuela²³¹. Finally, on November 1, 2018, it was registered in Liberia and raised the flag of Germany as "Aquarius Dignitus". However, this state also withdrew, and then no attempt was made to register it anywhere²³². In 2018, the ship was repeatedly refused entry to Italian ports and transported immigrants to Malta or Spain. In December 2018, the organization announced that it would cease its activities²³³.

The crew consisted of 10 people with the possibility of embarking a 15-person search and rescue, and medical group, as well as journalists. The rescue capacity was 200-550 people, and for some of the rescued there was no place inside the ship, so they had to stay on board²³⁴. The operation of the unit cost 11,000 euros a day, which made it possible to pay for the rent of the ship, crew, fuel, and all equipment necessary to care for refugees²³⁵. According to SOS MEDITERRANEE data, as of February 2016 in the Mediterranean region, thanks

²²⁸ *Keine Vatikan-Flagge für Mittelmeer-Rettungsschiff*, *Vatican News*, <https://www.vaticannews.va/de/vatikan/news/2018-09/keine-vatikan-flagge-mittelmeer-rettungsschiff-aquarius.html> [24.9.2019].

²²⁹ *Migrant rescue ship Aquarius getting Panama flag*, „Times of Malta“ from 28.08.2018, <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/migrant-rescue-ship-aquarius-getting-panama-flag.687824> [24.9.2019].

²³⁰ *Pourquoi le Panama veut retirer son pavillon à l'« Aquarius »*, „Le Monde“ from 22.09.2018, <https://www.lemonde.fr/a-bord-de-l-aquarius/article/2018/09/22/le-panama-veut-retirer-son-pavillon-a-l-aquarius?xtmc=aquarius&xtcr=1> [24.10.2019].

²³¹ *Rettungsschiff „Aquarius“: Seenotretter sprechen von „Schikanen und Rechtsbrüchen“*, „Süddeutsche Zeitung“ from 8.10.2018 [24.9.2019].

²³² A. Kelly, *'Race against time': flag revoked for Aquarius migrant rescue ship*, „The Guardian“ from 2.11.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/nov/02/race-against-time-flag-revoked-for-aquarius-ship> [23.9.2019].

²³³ *Aquarius ship to end migrant rescues, say MSF and SOS Méditerranée*, France24, <https://www.france24.com/en/20181206-aquarius-ship-end-migrant-rescues-say-msf-sos-mediterranee> [24.9.2019].

²³⁴ *Our ship: the MS Aquarius*, SOS Meditteranne, <http://sosmediterranee.org/our-ship-ms-aquarius/?lang=en> [23.9.2019].

²³⁵ N. Squires, *Rescue boat carrying 600 migrants stranded in Mediterranean in stand-off between Italy and Malta*, „The Telegraph“ from 11.06.2018 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/06/10/standoff-malta-italy-migrants-rescued-ngo-mediterranean/> [27.9.2019].

to the rescue operations of the organization, 19,325 people were saved and another 8,421 were taken from other rescue units for a total of 27,746²³⁶.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The mysterious organization, for which no information is available, is based on the ship "Audur", known only to be registered under the flag of the Netherlands. There is no information about its activities and current status²³⁷.

Table 1. Basic data of rescue vessels of non-governmental humanitarian organizations operating in the Mediterranean Sea

Name of the ship	User	Comments
1	2	3
Phoenix	Migrant Offshore Aid Station	Former oil rigs supply vessel built in 1973 in Canada. 483 GT, 396 DWT. Dimensions: 39.9 x 9.4 x 4.4 m.
Topaz Responder		Former oil rigs supply vessel built in 2015. 1 198 GT, 534 DWT. Dimensions: 50.9x9.4x? m.
Astral	Proactiva Open Arms	Motor sailing yacht built in 2017.
Golfo Azzurro		Former fishing vessel built in 1987 in Canada. 350 GTR. Dimensions: 42.81 x 8.5 x 4.42 m. Propulsion: 2,350 hp, speed 13 knots.
Open Arms		Former rescue tug built in 2074 in Spain. 427 GT, 351DWT. Dimensions: 36.9 x 9.5 x 5.1 or 37.72 x 9.5 x 4.78 m. Drive: Deutz RBV12M350 engine with a capacity of 4,000 HP.
1	2	3
Aquarius	SOS Méditerranée	Former Küstenwache, and later research unit of the German Coast Guard, built in 1977 in Germany. 1,812 GRT, 611 DWT. Dimensions: 77.34 x 11.8 x 5.7 m. Diesel-electric drive, 15 knots. On September

²³⁶ Source: official site SOS MEDITERRANEE, <https://sosmediterranee.it/> [27.9.2019].

²³⁷ NGOs Armada operating off the coast of Libya, <https://gefira.org/en/2016/11/16/ngos-armada-for-the-coast-of-libya/> [21.1.2020].

		1, 2018, the name was changed to Aquarius 2, and on November 1, 2018 to Aquarius Dignitus.
Sea-Watch	Sea-Watch	Former fishing research vessel built in 1968 in Great Britain. 2016-03-18 renamed Sea-Watch 2. 231 GRT, 85 DWT. Dimensions: 32.31 x 7.82 x 3.15. Propulsion: Blackstone ERS8M engine, 660 hp, speed 11.5 knots. In 2017, he was handed over to Mission Lifeline with the name change to Lifeline.
Sea-Watch 2		Sea-Watch ship
Sea-Watch 3		Dignity I ship
Iuventa	Jugend Rettet	Former unit used to build offshore wind farms built in 1962 in the Netherlands. 151 GRT. Dimensions: 28.4 x 6.74 x 2.70 m. Propulsion: 990 KM, speed 10 knots.
Mare Jonio	Mediterranea Saving Humans	Former tug built in 1972 in Italy. 100 NRT. Dimensions: 38x9x3 m. Propulsion: 2,400KM, speed 11.7 knots.
Dignity I	Doctors Without Borders	Former fishery research vessel built in 1972 in Japan. Dimensions: 50.33 x 11.57 x 4.56 m. Drive: 2 Caterpillar D399TA 2,250 HP engines, speed 10-12 knots. In 2017, it was renamed Sea-Watch 3
Bourbon Argos		Former oil rigs supply tug built in 2013. 2343 GRT, 2100 DWT. Dimensions: 68.6 x 15.4 x 5.9 m.
VOS Prudence		Former oil rigs supply tug built in 2012 in China. 2948 GT, 3323 DWT. Dimensions: 75x17.25x6.6 m. Drive: 2 engines, 3000 KM each.
Lifeline	Mission	Sea-Watch ship
Eleonore	Lifeline	Dimensions: 15x5x? m. No other data.
Alan Kurdi	Proem Aid	Former fishery research unit built in 1956 in Germany. 307 BRT, 92 NRT. Dimensions: 38.58 x 7.28 x 3.5 m. Drive: 300 HP diesel engine, speed 9-10 knots.
Life		Seefuchs ship

1	2	3
Seefuchs	Sea-Eye	Former fishing vessel built in 1959 in Germany. 133 BRT. Dimensions: 26.5 x 5.9 x 3.8 m. Drive: diesel engine 6NVD36, 236 HP, speed 10 knots. In March 2019, it was transferred to the Proem Aid organization.
Sea-Eye		Twin Seefuchs ship.
Speedy		Rubber inflatable boat with semi-rigid hull (RIB). No other data is available.
Rezai	CADUS	Rubber inflatable boat with semi-rigid hull (RIB). Dimensions: 7x3x? m. No other data.
H.E. Thomsen		Rubber inflatable boat with semi-rigid hull (RIB)m. No other data.
Minden	LifeBoat	Former rescue vessel built in 1985 in Germany. Dimensions: 23.3 x 5.5 x 1.8 m. Drive: 2 diesel engines 1944 KM, speed, 18 knots.
VOS Hestia	Save the Children	Former oil rigs supply vessel built in 2009 in China. 1678 GT, 1386 DWT. Dimensions: 59.25 x 14.95 x 5.5 m. Drive: 2610 hp.

NOTE: Dimensions are for length x width x draft, respectively.

Source: own research.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the fleet of ships used by NGOs to rescue illegal immigrants to the Mediterranean Sea allows for some fundamental conclusions. Perhaps most importantly, it is done with public understanding, and without enthusiasm from coastal states. The blame probably lies in the middle between the restrictive application of the law, and rationalism in limiting illegal immigration, and, despite the noble goal, idealism and balancing on the borderline of the law by non-governmental organizations. There is also a significant dependence of the activities of these organizations on donations from donors. For this reason, the fleet of rescue ships comprises a whole range of vessels, from modern to 60-year-olds, which, however, rebuilt, effectively fulfill the role assigned to them. The total rescue possibilities for ships are not large, although they seem enormous in the media. The largest of them can accommodate up to about 400 people in the

maximum variant, but most of them can transport up to several dozen people, and it seems that these numbers decrease with the deteriorating weather conditions. In total, these are not great values, but in total, on an annual basis, one ship has an average of several thousand saved, which is a large number per capita, and this is how it is perceived.

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