

## Oh, the *Humanity!*

On November 6, 2022, German charity vessel *Humanity 1* arrived at an Italian port carrying 179 migrants who were designated as “rescued at sea.” The Italian port authority accepted 144 of the migrants, primarily minors and those in need of medical assistance, but refused to accept the remaining 35 migrants on the ship.<sup>1</sup> In protest of Italy's refusal to process all the migrants onboard, the captain of the *Humanity 1* has refused to leave the port until the remaining migrants have been allowed to disembark.<sup>2</sup>

Since 2010, the European Union has seen a stark influx of migrants and asylum seekers hoping to find a better life in Europe. In recent years, right-wing governments have been elected to leadership positions in a number of EU member states and have the explicit objective of reducing immigration which many now see as a problem. EU humanitarian law dictates that, should someone seeking asylum set foot on EU soil, they must be processed thoroughly within the country where they arrived, and if they are found to qualify as an asylum seeker under the United Nations’ definition, they are permitted entry. Countries on the borders of the EU face many steep costs surrounding the processing of asylum seekers and migrants due to their ease of access by outside parties. Italy in particular sees a significant number of migrants due to its location on the Mediterranean Sea and proximity to Africa.

A number of EU countries have spoken out against Italy's refusal to accept the remaining migrants, including Germany and France, as well as the non-governmental organizations that rescue and transport individuals saved in the Mediterranean to Europe. Many believe that these migrants should be allowed to enter the country because they have a right to live in safety. However, the Italian Government claims that Italy is not obligated to host non-citizens, particularly when the NGOs that carry them do not disclose their routes or intention to transport migrants.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Should the fact that the current Italian government was democratically elected on a platform to *reduce* immigration rates figure in their decision to accept migrants from the *Humanity 1*? If so, how?
2. Is it morally justifiable for Italy to limit admissions to minors and those needing medical assistance?
3. In cases of conflicting values, should the Italian government prioritize the well-being of its citizens or its humanitarian aims?

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/italy-closes-its-ports-to-rescue-ships-leaving-1100-migrants-in-limbo>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-allows-minors-sick-leave-migrant-ship-2022-11-06/>

