

SOCIAL RIGHTS AMBASSADORS WORKSHOP | CINE POR LA PAZ – Cartas Mojadas Toledo (Spain), 21 October 2022

On 21st October 2022 at 20:00, MPDL hosted the screening of the documentary *Cartas Mojadas*, in the framework of their Festival [Cine por la Paz](#) (Cinema for Peace). The Spanish film, directed by Paula Palacios, was released in 2020. It follows the rescue ship from NGO Open Arms, saving people in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe, and documents part of exiled people's demise in the streets of Paris. This event was funded by the European Commission through SOLIDAR's project "Realising Social Europe For All and With All" as the activity "Social Rights Ambassadors workshop".

The screening was followed a panel discussion on the film, moderated by Vicente Baeza, Head of Social Mobilization, Communication and Volunteering at MPDL. Manuel de la Rocha, President of MPDL, expressed how impacting the film was, showing terrible yet real images that are worth a thousand words.

Mamadou Sow, Guinean participant in MPDL's international protection programme with this experience of migrating by boat, recounted that while there are many reasons why one comes to Europe, people in countries of origin don't enjoy any kind of security whatsoever, and though the path to Europe is deadly, what they leave behind is so dangerous that crossing remains worth the try. Arriving to Europe, Mamadou felt reborn. He also shared some of his problems on European territory, like the fact he not longer has work permit and the procedures to get a new one is long and burdensome.

To the question of whether this is a political film, Paula Palacios, director, said she believed Europe could do a lot more than it's currently doing, and each must do what they can to help – she did her part by putting a face and a story on each person, humanising them.

The moderator then asked CSOs representatives their thoughts on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Alba Gonzalez, from SOLIDAR, spoke for all CSOs about the shock from the lack of solidarity with migrant people. The double standards with welcoming migrants is striking: EU Member States welcome Ukrainian refugees with open arms, as they should, but close borders to migrants from other countries or cultures. SOLIDAR always has put forward the necessity to respect the rights of people, and to create spaces where CSOs gather and act as a force to pressure Member States to move towards a humane Pact respecting fundamental rights, and showing coherence between migration and international cooperation policies, taking into consideration the economic poverty in third countries for instance, often at the root of migration decisions.

Lourdes Nieto, from Médecins du Monde Castilla-la-Mancha, spoke from the standpoint of humanitarian CSOs working on the frontlines to support migrant people and made the case for the right to health. These



people have no access to health, especially mental health, intercultural mediation is mostly absent from any care they may receive. She called for safe pathways for people to migrate, and the enforcement of the right to health.

Paula Palacios explained that everything in the film is real, non-staged footage. She explained that it's a mix of coincidences, luck and interpersonal relations that got her to be allowed to film on the boats. Especially, a Libyan colonel she met even invited her to come film on the boat he managed, because Libyan coastguards are proud of the work they're doing, for the EU. Yet what is taking place in Libya is violent, just as what goes on in Paris. She mentioned being struck by the high number of embarcations on the Mediterranean and being saddened to show smugglers.

During the Q&A, a member of the audience took the floor to share his moving testimony of fleeing his country, Morocco, to be able to live his life out as gay without fearing threats or judgment from his relatives. He too went on a boat like Mamadou Sow, and stayed 3 days without eating or drinking, to reach a better life.

The concluding sentence of the discussion was this address to EU Member States: if there is a will, there is a way.

[Read more about Paula Palacios' experience on directing *Cartas Mojadas* on Baynana.](#)

