



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
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الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

The dangers of Social NIMBY Syndromes in the context of “Migration and Environmental Refugees” phenomena.

The roots of discrimination acts, created by the persistence of negative “Not In My Back Yard” syndromes against immigrants, should be eliminated. There is a need to establish positive behaviors and active cooperation between host and migrant communities by using the strong influence of politicians and the media to lower local tensions and to foster positive NIMBYs against criminal organizations.

This syndrome, normally affects a community when a polluting plant is located on its territory. Responding to perceived threat, population starts mobilizing against its construction. Often, however, these types of phenomena also occur socially, such as in response to the presence of prisons, nomad camps, mental health care facilities and, in our specific case, immigrants. These types of NIMBYs are very dangerous because they breed a climate of intolerance and discrimination. The official position of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean must be to reject them.

The problem of “Environmental Refugees” is a real one, and in the near future, it will continue to grow. Climate change is triggering a number of dramatic phenomena, especially in the poorest regions, where a key issue is the lack of water resources. For this reason, an increasingly high number of people are migrating. It is therefore vital to reach the fundamental goal of offering these migrants, a concrete possibility of integration within their host community. This can be achieved, first of all, by creating a climate of tolerance and acceptance. Secondly the migrants must avoid “self-ghettoization” by participating in the integration process. To accomplish these goals the most important step is to change the mentality of localism that is persistent in many regions. This effort must begin with the politicians, who should respond forcefully to these negative behaviors. They must act by promoting both positive attitudes and positive NIMBYs, and in addition to directing popular protests against those who turn immigrants into a business: local criminal organizations. Politicians should replace the climate of insecurity with one of trust, loyalty and cooperation. At the same time, the media has an important role to play due to their strategic position within civil society. The media tend to ride the popular protests, and this only contributes to the consolidation of this climate of tension that runs through the local communities. The hope is that the media will facilitate, away from demagogy of politics, to building “bridges” rather than “walls” between the host and migrant communities. Consequently, they can also help to promote the ideals of mutual tolerance and respect.

PAM’s role is that of a platform for discussion on these issues, as it is a forum open to the different voices of all stakeholders. The Organization has a key role to play in encouraging the development and implementation of bottom-up policies aimed at raising awareness of diversity and involving the local and migrant communities in the acquisition a consciousness of inter-cultural dialogue in order to overcome intolerance, prejudice and discrimination.