



Sea-Watch.org

Annual Report

2024



10 YEARS Sea rescue at Europe's borders

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#SafePassage

For legal escape routes, freedom of movement
and a Europe based on solidarity.



Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

Sea-Watch

Who we are and what we do

Sea-Watch is an organization of political activists that campaigns for global freedom of movement and the overcoming of European isolationist policies. Every year, thousands of people drown while fleeing across the central Mediterranean because safe and legal escape routes are systematically denied. We rescue people in distress at sea, document human rights violations and publicly call for a radical change of European policy. For us, sea rescue is not

just duty, but a political intervention against a racist border regime that deliberately excludes and endangers people.

Our vision is clear: a world without borders, racism and injustice, in which all people can live self-determined, safe and free lives. This goal guides our actions - whether at sea, in the air or on land. We work in a context of grassroots democracy and solidarity, promote cooperation with other organizations and mobilize people to join us. We are financed almost exclusively by private donations and are religiously and politically independent.



What we do - our tasks in action

Rescuing people in distress at sea: We intervene with our rescue ships when people are in acute danger in the central Mediterranean. Our aim is to bring these people safely ashore as quickly as possible. Since our foundation, we have been involved in the rescues of over 47,000 people.

Documenting human rights violations: With the help of our reconnaissance aircraft, we uncover the cooperation of European states with criminal actors such as the so-called Libyan coast guard, document rights violations and make these incidents public.

Demanding and bringing about political change: As political actors, we use activist, political and legal instruments to advocate for radical changes in policy. This is the only way to put an end to the dying in the Mediterranean.

Creating public awareness: Through reporting and campaigns, we make visible how the European border regime systematically violates human rights. We provide information about conditions in the Mediterranean and create spaces for networking, protest and resistance.

We know: The injustice at Europe's external borders is no coincidence, but rather is the result of political decisions. We see it as our duty to denounce these decisions and to work together with others for a world of solidarity.

For the right to leave.

For the right to arrive.

For the right to stay.

For the right to freedom of movement.

Our Demands

Borders exist to prevent all people from being free and equal. They distinguish who enjoys rights and privileges - and who does not. While some people fly halfway around the world to relax, others die trying to cross borders to get themselves and their loved ones to safety. Borders are not a natural phenomenon. They are created, they are paid for, they are maintained and they are enforced.

We are fighting for a world in which every single person can move freely. Such a world would be fairer, freer and safer for everyone. But such a world is a long way off - and this became even clearer in 2024.

On the way there, we are calling on the European Union, its member states and its institutions for:

- # **Safe and legal escape routes to the EU**
- # **A European sea rescue programme**
- # **The end of the principle of first entry to arrival in the EU**
- # **The dissolution of Frontex**
- # **The end of agreements that make borders more dangerous and violent**
- # **The decriminalization of flight**
- # **The end of the obstruction and criminalization of civil sea rescue**

To end the deaths in the Mediterranean, we need **safe and legal escape routes to Europe**. People must have the opportunity to find protection without having to risk their lives. We call for a non-military and comprehensive **sea rescue programme, funded and coordinated by the EU**. States must unconditionally fulfill their duty to rescue people in distress at sea. After arriving at a safe port in Europe, **people must then be allowed to decide for themselves in which country they want to stay**.

The European border protection agency Frontex is an integral part of an EU policy that focuses on isolation and the prevention of migration. Frontex enables the pullback practices of the so-called Libyan coastguard, under which people are intercepted at sea and returned to Libya through air surveillance and exclusive information transfer. **We believe that Frontex cannot be reformed and we call for the agency to be disbanded**. Those responsible for the human rights violations that take place on a daily basis must be held accountable. Frontex's mandate is incompatible with compliance with international maritime and human rights conventions.

The European Union and its member states are providing support to violent militias and state structures in Libya and Tunisia that are involved in human rights violations and the

suppression of civil society. **We call for an end to all programmes and agreements with third countries that make borders more dangerous and violent.**

No one should be criminalized for fleeing. The deterrent tactics used by European states to arbitrarily criminalize people seeking protection for allegedly "aiding and abetting illegal entry" must stop. Flight is not a crime - we demand freedom for the *El Hiblu 3* and all other refugees detained for political reasons!

Rescuing people in distress at sea is a duty under international law. As long as states do not fulfill their duty, civil society fills this gap. **European states therefore must no longer hinder sea rescue, be it in Italy or Germany.** Information about distress at sea must be shared without restriction by state actors with all ships that can rescue and bring people to a safe port. The practice of only sharing this information with the so-called Libyan coast guard, which is deporting people back to Libya, must end.

Migration is not the crisis, Europe is

by *Mattea (association member and head of operations of Sea-Watch e.V.)*

The Mediterranean has not disappeared from the scene, but is being pushed out of sight. Boats are still capsizing, people are drowning, and European governments are doing everything they can to ensure that nobody sees it. Those who rescue are persecuted. Those who report are declared the enemy. Those who flee are made invisible.

Because Europe has made itself at home behind its wall: With bureaucracies that administer death. With laws that keep people out by all means. With political deals that out-source violence. Borders become bulwarks, fascists feed their voters with racist lies and every election campaign is like a boxing match in which the winner is the one who can deport the best. And at some point, a European border guard will "accidentally" slip his finger on the trigger ...

A Sea Watch ship set sail for the first time in 2015. At that time, we had no idea what repression the coming years would bring. Ships were blocked, refugees criminalized, our work sabotaged. While the last ten years of Sea-Watch feel like a huge challenge, the coming ones are like an endless feat of strength. Enemies of humanity are gaining power all over the world. Weidel, Putin, Meloni, Trump, Orbán, Netanyahu - they are all the protagonists in the next chapter of world history.

But fascism does not simply arise. It is created. And it can be stopped. Through all of us, through the way we deal with migration and the way we talk about it.

"Illegal", "criminal", "crisis" - words create reality. Calling people "illegal" justifies disenfranchising them. And those who perpetuate the narrative of the "criminal foreigner" allow fascists an easy game. But we must not play along with their game - not play the "good migrant" off against the "bad" one or have a moral debate with statistics that prove that migration is "not such a big problem". We need to name things for what they are: **Migration is not the crisis. Europe is.**



Photo: Edith Geuppert



Photo: Boris Niehaus

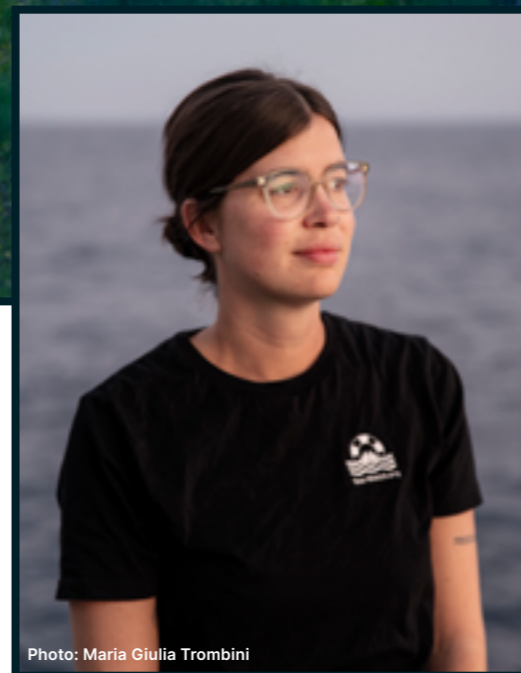


Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

So let's not talk about migration as a challenge for Europe, but about Europe as a challenge for migrants. Because it is not the people on the move who cause crises - it is the political decision-makers. Those who erect deadly borders, who turn passports into securities, who guarantee migration for some and make it lifethreatening for others.

Migration is not a problem to be managed, but a centuries old reality. People move. Not because they are naive, not because they have been deceived, but because they are making decisions. Because they are not waiting for Europe to show mercy. Because they are taking action themselves. Because migration is resistance. Migration is life. Migration is change.

This world will not become fairer if we just carry on as we are. This world will become fairer if we unite, if we show solidarity, if we refuse to be intimidated. If they criminalize our work, we will do it all the more. And if they declare us their enemy, we'll take that as a badge of honor.

Ten years ago and today: Siamo tutti antifascisti. 2025 is ours, not theirs.

Field of application and actors

European Union

- **CEAS:** The EU is undermining the right to asylum with the asylum reform.
- **Deportation policy:** More and more people are deported to countries where they are exposed to persecution and violence.
- **Repression:** Increased resistance against civil social organizations and their work.

Frontex

- **Surveillance instead of rescue:** Frontex practically limits itself to aerial surveillance and deploys aircraft and drones in the central Mediterranean.
- **Human rights violations:** Frontex works with the so-called Libyan Coast Guard and provides coordinates of refugee boats, which regularly leads to illegal pushbacks.
- **A legal vacuum:** Frontex operates without legal supervision, resulting in a lack of accountability and responsibility.
- **Billion-euro budget:** By the year 2027, the work of Frontex cost the EU 5.6 billion euros.

The so-called Libyan Coast Guard

- **Illegal pushbacks:** People on the move are being dragged back to Libya against international legal standards.
- **Militias:** This coast guard is made up of armed groups.
- **Violence against people on the move:** Shots fired at boats, physical violence and abuse are common practice.
- **EU funding:** The so-called Libyan coast guard is trained and financed by EU states to the tune of millions.

SAR regions are international sea areas in which states are responsible for the coordination of sea rescue.

Civil sea rescue

- **Sea-Watch 5 & Aurora:** Sea-Watch is active in the central Mediterranean with these two ships.
- **Civil fleet:** Over 15 other organizations are also active and rescue people in distress at sea.

Civil aerial reconnaissance

- **Aircraft in action:** Sea-Watch uses several aircraft to monitor the Mediterranean, report maritime emergencies and document human rights violations.
- **Preservation of evidence:** Our reconnaissance often delivers the only basis for legal action against human rights violations.

Merchant ships

- **Avoiding areas of distress:** Many merchant ships avoid the area in which maritime emergencies frequently occur in order to avoid the duty to rescue.
- **Participation in pushbacks:** Some merchant ships are actively involved in illegal pushbacks by handing over people on the move to the so-called Libyan coast guard.

Berlin

- **Sea-Watch headquarters:** coordination and management of our work from Berlin
- **Mobilization:** Political campaigns, demonstrations and cooperation with supporters [see p. 26–37]
- **Back office:** administration and planning for the rescue and reconnaissance operations.

Italy

- **Repressive decrees:** Italy is constantly passing new decrees that make civil sea rescue more difficult and detaining civil ships for "noncompliance".
- **Deals with third countries:** Italy concludes agreements, such as with Libya or Tunisia, that continue to prevent refugees from arriving in Europe and violate international rights.

Tunisia

- **No safe haven:** Tunisia cannot be classified as a safe country - neither for Tunisians nor for people on the move.
- **Lack of legal protection:** Tunisia has no national asylum law.
- **Racist violence:** in 2023, at least 1,200 people were abandoned in the desert by the authorities after being pursued.

Lampedusa

- **Europe's southernmost island:** Lampedusa is the first port of call for many people fleeing across the Mediterranean.
- **Starting point for rescue:** the *Aurora* and our civilian air reconnaissance take off from here.

Malta

- **Denial of responsibility:** Malta does not participate in rescue operations, consistently refuses to take in rescued people and thus completely shirks its duty under international law.

Libya

- **Horror in camps:** People on the move are threatened with torture, sexualized violence and death in detention camps.
- **Civil war:** Libya has been plagued by civil war for years, which exacerbates the situation.
- **Main escape route:** Since the closure of the Balkan route, one of the main escape routes runs through Libya.

TUNISIA

LIBYA

LIBYA

Rescuing people from distress at sea



The Mediterranean remains the world's deadliest escape route - not by chance, but because European states are doing everything they can to prevent migration. Instead of offering protection, rescue ships are blocked and the so-called Libyan coast guard - armed militias financed with EU funds - are used as henchmen to forcibly deport people back to Libya. Refugees in acute distress at sea are deliberately ignored and their rescues are delayed or prevented.

Our crews on the *Sea-Watch 5* and the *Aurora* faced numerous challenges in 2024: targeted detentions, bureaucratic chicanes and orders to dock at unnecessarily distant ports - all with the aim of hindering civil sea rescue.

This chapter provides an insight into our operations on the water. It tells of rescues, tragic losses, politically motivated blockades - and of the resilience and strength of the people who cross borders every day. Of the courage that shows us what it really means to demand the right to freedom.

While Europe is rejecting people seeking protection, disenfranchising them and pushing them back ever more brutally, we were on the Mediterranean to save lives. In fourteen operations, we were able to save over 1,200 people from drowning. ➔

Ignored Emergency calls claim lives!

On the morning of March 6, 2024, we found a wooden boat drifting in the Mediterranean - it was completely overcrowded and listing dangerously to one side. After we were able to get everyone from the upper deck on board our small boats, we reached the people on the lower deck. Many of them were in a medically critical condition.

Poisoning from fuel gases - an invisible danger in overcrowded boats

Time and again, we come across people affected by severe fuel poisoning during our operations. Leaking fuel mixes with water in the boats, while toxic vapors irritate the respiratory tract and lead to unconsciousness. This is particularly dangerous for people on the lower decks of the boats, who are crowded together and have no access to fresh air.

When we took the people from the lower deck out of the boat on March 6, we found that five of the people were in a critical condition. One of them was Rahman. He had suffered exactly this kind of poisoning - a direct consequence of the life-threatening conditions that people are exposed to during their flight.

People die again and again, because there is no state aid

Rahman had set off around ten hours earlier with 55 other people to find a life of safety. But when our crew brought him on board, he was already unconscious. We immediately called for a medical evacuation - repeatedly and with the utmost urgency. But the Italian authorities ignored our requests. Our medical team on board fought for hours to save his life, but Rahman



Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

man died as a result of the poisoning. He was not even 20 years old.

The four other poisoned people were only finally evacuated by the Italian coastguard nine hours after our initial calls.



Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

Power games on the backs of the survivors

Although the critical situation on board was known, we were assigned Ravenna as a safe port, a place 1,500 kilometers away. In view of the impending bad weather, the journey there would have taken seven days. This practice of deliberately forcing civilian rescue ships out of the area of operation by issuing distant port instructions is a calculated tactic to hinder rescue operations.

After persistent insistence and media pressure, we were able to persuade Italy to assign us the nearby port of Pozzallo. On March 8 - two days after the rescue - the rescued people were finally able to go ashore. Instead of receiving the fastest possible medical care, the survivors had to spend further unnecessary hours at sea because of this politically induced delay.

Detention - targeted blockade of rescue ships

No sooner had the *Sea-Watch 5* reached the port of Pozzallo than the next blow was received: the Italian authorities imposed a 20-day detention on our ship - officially for a violation of the Piantedosi Decree. But in reality, the aim here is to sabotage civil rescue operations by preventing ships from setting sail using bureaucratic blockades. While our ships are paralyzed by these bureaucratic measures, people continue to die at sea.

Piantedosi decree

The Piantedosi Decree, which was adopted in January 2023, contains a number of provisions that violate international law, aiming to hinder our rescue operations. Sometimes civilian rescue ships are ordered by the Italian government to head for an Italian port immediately after a rescue, even if there are other maritime emergencies in the vicinity. An alleged breach of the decree leads to sixty-day detentions and even confiscation of the ship, as well as a fine of up to 50,000 euros.

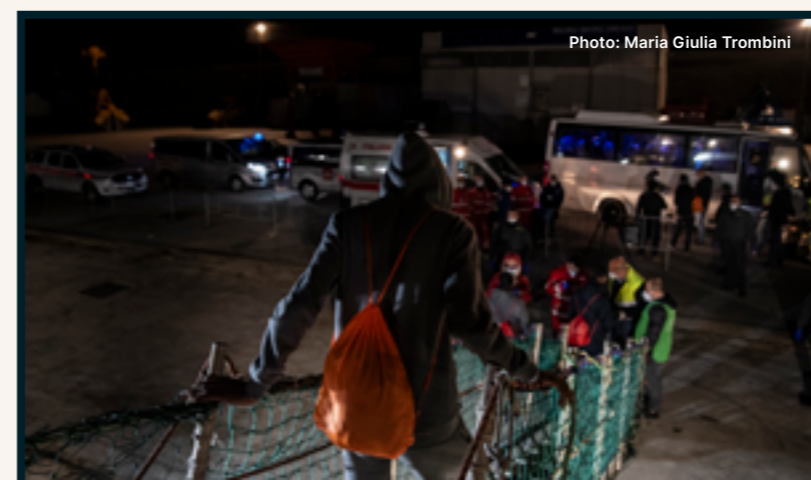


Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

There will always be strength and beauty in resistance

Due to the good weather conditions, many people dare to make the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean in summer. When the *Sea-Watch 5* set sail on a new operation in July, the crew was prepared for challenging scenarios. Matteo, who was on board as head of operations, gives us an insight into the situation on the ship.

Tell us more about how the rescues went!

Mattea: Shortly after arriving in the rescue area, we received a message from our *Seabird* reconnaissance aircraft: a boat with 31 people in acute distress had been spotted. We immediately set course for the coordinates given and brought everyone safely on board. A short time later, our crew spotted another boat - 125 people, including many women and children, were on board. The second rescue presented us with special challenges. Many people were crammed into the lower deck, some suffered from gasoline poisoning, six



of them needed urgent treatment. Our team provided the people with life jackets and gradually stabilized them before we were able to bring them safely onto the *Sea-Watch 5*. A total of 156 survivors were finally on board - exhausted, but safe for the time being.

How are the people on board looked after?

Mattea: When people come on board the *Sea-Watch 5*, the most important thing is their physical safety, medical and hygienic care, water and food. Many survivors were dehydrated and hypothermic, some

had suffered burns due to fuel residues. The onboard hospital thus became the central point of contact. In addition to medical help, we provided everyone with hot meals, water, fresh clothes and places to rest. The *Sea-Watch 5* enables us to provide two hot meals a day - a big step forward compared to our previous ships. In addition, tea and energy bars are available at all times to give people back a bit of selfdetermination. Eating together on deck has become an important way for the crew and guests to interact.



How do you prepare the survivors for what awaits them?

Mattea: In addition to basic care, it would actually be urgently necessary to offer the survivors plenty of rest and comprehensive psychological support, but unfortunately there is far too little time for this. The days on the ship are the last opportunity to inform people about their rights before they are caught up in a system that will get rid of them by any means necessary. Our protection

officer on board held info sessions in various languages to prepare the rescued people for the Italian asylum system. We provided particularly vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors or survivors of torture or human trafficking with targeted advice and, where possible, initial contact with aid organizations on land. The people also supported each other - either by caring for each other or by providing translation assistance.

Are there also moments of lightness?

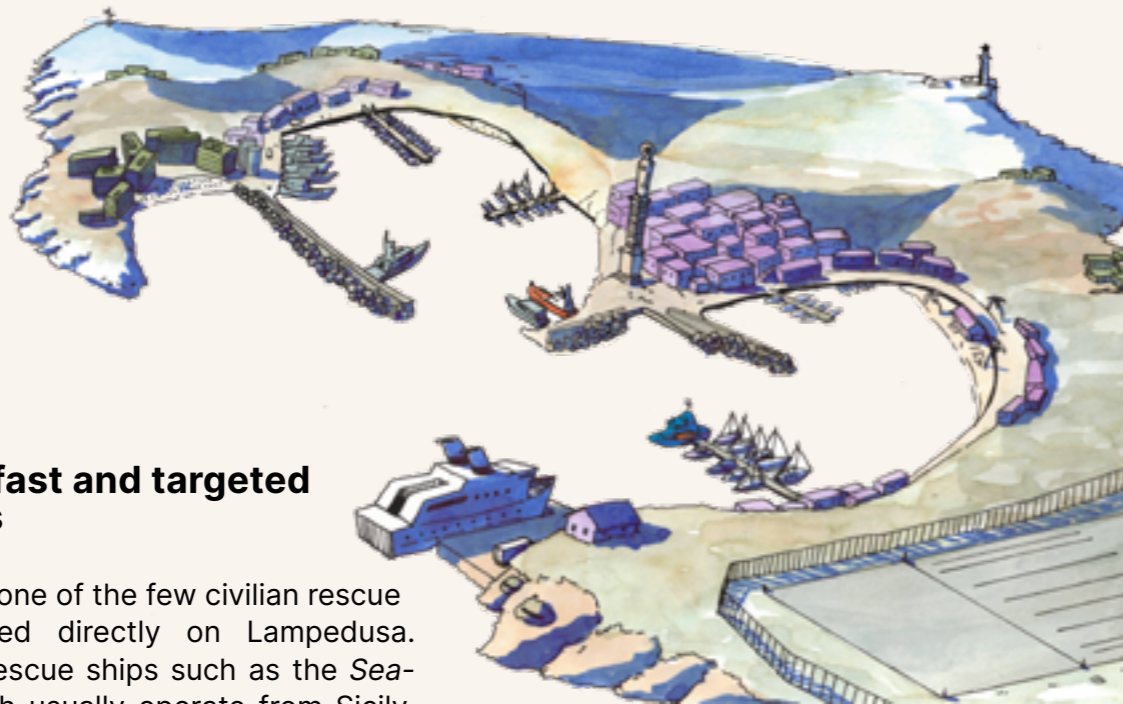
Mattea: Yes, despite the terrible circumstances, there are always moments of joy. During the long journey to La Spezia, the deck became a place of community. One evening, we created a playlist together to which people contributed their favorite songs. There was dancing and laughter, as if all bad memories had been switched off for a brief moment. I am deeply impressed to see how much resistance against the violent and racist circumstances exists. Resistance that shows itself in the dignity, humanity and joy with which people meet even after a traumatic experience such as the crossing of the Mediterranean. People dance, sing and support each other, despite the extreme situations they have been through.

This shows that violence can never completely break human resistance - there will always be strength and beauty in resistance.



Aurora – Quick rescue off Lampedusa

There are few places in the Mediterranean that play such a central role for people on the move as Lampedusa. The small Italian island is located just a few hundred kilometers from the North African coast and is often the first port of call for people trying to cross the Mediterranean. People have been rescued from distress at sea here for decades - by the Italian coastguard, by fishermen and by local residents. But despite this long tradition of providing help, the situation on the island is becoming increasingly dire: people crossing on boats are ever more often left to their fates, either because there is no state rescue or because the so-called Libyan coastguard forcibly takes them back to Libyan torture camps.

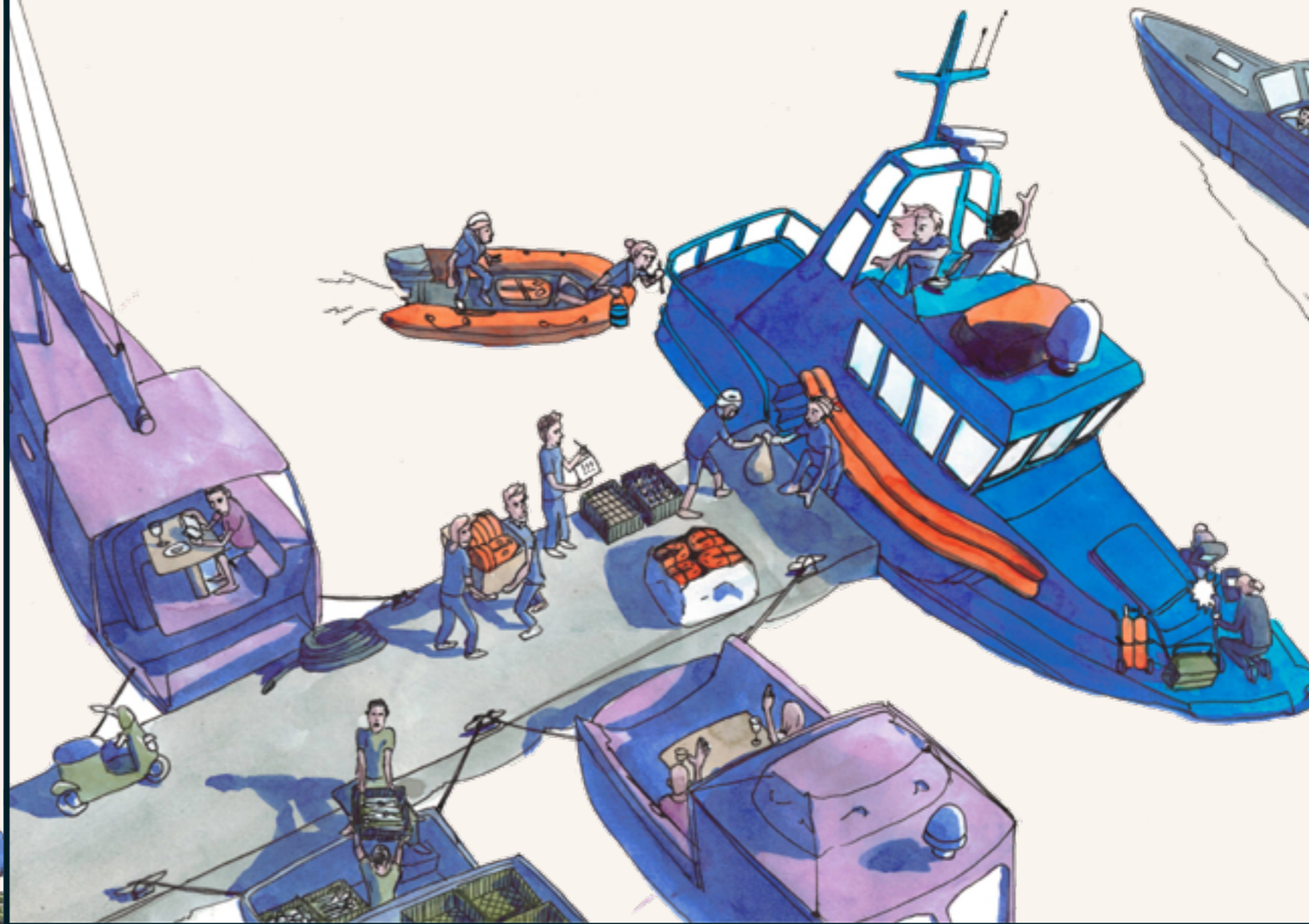


A ship for fast and targeted operations

The *Aurora* is one of the few civilian rescue ships stationed directly on Lampedusa. Unlike large rescue ships such as the *Sea-Watch 5* which usually operate from Sicily, the *Aurora* can set sail in a short space of time. It is small, manoeuvrable and fast, ideal for stabilizing people in acute distress, distributing life jackets or securing boats on the open sea. In emergencies, the crew takes people on board, but the ship is not designed to care for people seeking protection for long periods of time. There is hardly any protection from wind and weather, only limited medical equipment and space on board is scarce.

Ready to rescue around the clock

The crew of the *Aurora* consists of seven members: a head of operations, crew for medical care and technical work and a driver for the dinghy. The deployment periods last several weeks, during which the crew is on standby around the clock. As soon as an emergency is reported, the *Aurora* takes off - day or night.



Deployment in December: 47 people rescued

On December 19 2024, the *Aurora* rescued 47 people from an overcrowded wooden boat that was already full of water. Our *Seabird* reconnaissance aircraft had previously spotted and reported the boat. But the authorities had failed to act. The people had spent two days on the open sea and were showing the first signs of hypothermia.

Instead of being allowed to sail to Lampedusa, we were forced to take the exhausted people to Pozzallo - a journey lasting over twelve hours. With low temperatures and no protective space on board, this decision was an additional strain for the rescued people.

Speed can be the difference between life and death

This rescue was one of several operations carried out by the *Aurora* in 2024 - and it demonstrates that when people are in acute distress at sea, every minute counts. The *Aurora* has proven itself time and again with its flexibility and speed, filling an important gap in the civil fleet. One thing is clear to us: as long as people's lives are in danger while fleeing, the *Aurora* will be deployed in the Mediterranean.

Illustrations: Adrian Pourviseh

Documenting Human rights violations

What happens in the Mediterranean often remains hidden – deliberately. Emergencies at sea are ignored, rescue obligations are disregarded and pushbacks are covered up. Without independent monitoring, there is no evidence of these systematic human rights violations. This is why our *Seabird* reconnaissance aircraft is in action: we document where European states are failing and make visible what governments want to cover up.

This chapter shows what we have seen from the air: people in distress at sea who were ignored by the authorities for days on end, brutal pushbacks to Libya in violation of international law – but also last-minute rescues in which civilian ships stepped in while state authorities failed to act. Our documentation is often the only evidence we can use to take action against illegal practices – be it in legal action against Italy or in exposing human rights violations before international courts.

In 2024, our crews flew 151 operations and discovered 221 boats in distress with a total of over 10,900 people on board. We documented illegal pushbacks, failure to provide assistance and systemic cooperation between European authorities and actors such as the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. ➔



Photo: Stefano Belacchi

Only witnesses

"A white tank top, a green Tshirt, short black pants, a naked body, a red sweatshirt, black socks and short blue pants. I wonder what thoughts these people had when they put on their clothes that day. I saw them floating in the middle of the Mediterranean, their faces either turned towards the sun or into the depths. Their arms and legs outstretched as if they were making a last desperate attempt to be seen. We have seen them. As witnesses to a massacre that Europe should know nothing about."

These clear words come from Martina. As media coordinator, she accompanies Sea-Watch's reconnaissance flights. In the days leading up to the European elections in June 2024, our aircraft *Seabird* was flying its usual search patterns over the central Mediterranean when it discovered the first lifeless body floating on the surface of the water. At least 17 bodies were discovered by NGOs in the following 48 hours. It was civilian, not governmental, organizations that recovered 12 of them from the sea.

Without civilian actors, this tragedy would probably have remained invisible. We know that other bodies were spotted in the sea that we were unable to recover. We will never know their identities or how many people really died in this shipwreck. **Our anger and sadness are indescribable, because we know: These people could have been saved!**

Photo: Jana Bauch

Anyone who does not comply with the duty to rescue belongs in the dock!



Photo: Mika Grunwaldt

On September 2 2024, our *Seabird* reconnaissance aircraft spotted a boat with 28 people in distress about 26 nautical miles off Lampedusa. From the air, we could see that the boat was deep in the water and in an extremely unstable condition. We immediately informed the relevant authorities, including the Italian coastguard. Despite the proximity to the port of Lampedusa - a distance that could have been covered in about an hour - the Italian authorities failed to act. Only on the morning of September 4, just 10 nau-

tical miles off Lampedusa, 7 survivors were rescued. 21 people drowned as a result of this failure to provide assistance.

In collaboration with three survivors and the son of one of the victims, we have filed a criminal complaint against the Italian authorities for multiple negligent homicides. This complaint is based on witness statements, photographic evidence and forensic reports. We are calling for a comprehensive investigation to bring those responsible to justice.

Ibrahim Hsian, the son of one of the people who died in the shipwreck on September 2, has written a letter.

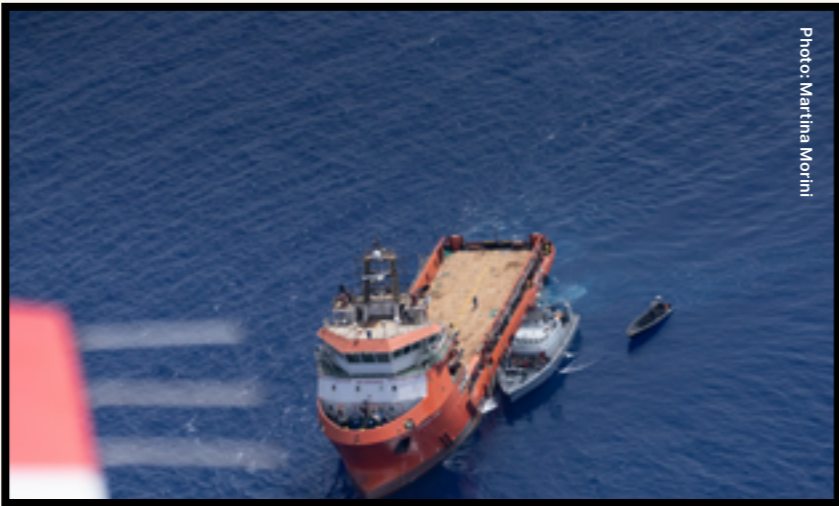
You can read it here: sea-watch.org/en/my-father-was-a-unique-irreplaceable-person/



While our aerial reconnaissance uncovers human rights violations, the Italian aviation authority ENAC is trying to make precisely this work more difficult. Since May 2024, civilian surveillance flights have been deliberately obstructed by creating new bureaucratic hurdles and threatening arrests. In October, the Italian government stepped up the pressure further: a new law enables the confiscation of NGO aircraft and heavy fines for organizations such as Sea-Watch. These measures have a clear aim - to eliminate civilian surveillance and make dying at sea invisible.

Illegal pushbacks to Libya – violence as a system

On June 18, 2024, our crew on board the *Seabird* observed an illegal pushback. The merchant ship *MARIDIVE ZOHR 1* had rescued around 60 people from distress at sea, but instead of bringing them to safety, a patrol boat of the so-called Libyan coast guard intervened. The armed forces boarded the ship and forced the rescued people to get on board their vessel, beating and threatening them. They were deported to Libya - back to a country where they are threatened with arbitrary detention, violence, torture and enslavement.



Our crew tried to inform the captain of the *MARIDIVE ZOHR 1* via radio about the illegality of the handover. But he stated that he was following instructions from the Libyan authorities - otherwise he would be arrested.

In February 2024, Italy's highest court confirmed that such pushbacks are ille-

gal. The captain of the *Asso 28* was convicted for handing over 100 people to the so-called Libyan coastguard in 2018. Despite clear court rulings however, co-operation with these actors continues.

As long as European states allow these forced returns and even help to finance them, people continue to be returned to

places where they are threatened with the most serious human rights violations.

In 2024 alone, at least 21,762 people were illegally pushed back by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, often to torture camps and inhumane conditions.

Rescue at the last minute



On Tuesday, July 16, we were already flying the second time of the day with our *Seabird* aircraft when we received information about a boat in distress in Maltese waters. It was already getting dark and we only had a small window of time - so we immediately set off to search for the boat.

If we had reached the emergency just a few minutes later, we would not have been able to find the people in the darkness. But we discovered them in time and transmitted the coordinates to our friends on the sailing ship *Nadir*. When they arrived later that night, the boat had already sunk and the 21 people were in the water. All of them were rescued.



Where Europe looks away, we look closely – and denounce

Our aerial reconnaissance not only shows what is happening in the Mediterranean - it proves what states want to cover up. Every pushback, every ignored distress call, every delayed rescue is proof of the systematic disenfranchisement of people on the move. We are not documenting for archives, but to demand responsibility: in court, in public and towards those who would rather protect borders than human lives.

Bring about Political change

Our work does not end at sea – we must also campaign on land for an end to the dying in the Mediterranean. After all, sea rescue is not just a humanitarian necessity, but a political debate that takes place on the streets, in the media, in the courts and in political spheres.

In this chapter, we show how we are resisting on land – through political work, public mobilization and support for a growing movement fighting for the rights of people on the move. ➔



What is advocacy work?

Thanks to the documentation work on our aircraft and the experience gained by our crews, we have clear evidence of the violence of the so-called Libyan coast guard and the role of Frontex in violent pushbacks, our ship crews know from their own experience about how European coastal control centers refuse to hand over information about boats in distress to civilian rescue ships, and we know the numerous tactics used by Italian authorities to detain rescue ships on flimsy grounds. But how does all this knowledge get to where political or legal decisions are made?

The advocacy team is responsible for this. It is the interface between the political world and Sea-Watch as an organization. The team keeps political decision-makers up to date on current developments, provides expertise in the context of legislative procedures, pursues legal proceedings and thus tries to achieve political and legal consequences for the violence in the central Mediterranean.

The punitive rage of the states must be stopped!

Every year, thousands of people on the move are arrested in Greece and Italy for driving boats. Often it is precisely these people who have tried every means to make the crossing as safe as possible for themselves and all passengers. The accusation is "Aiding and abetting illegal entry", and proceedings are often conducted in disregard of all rule of law principles, resulting in long prison sentences. At the beginning of 2024, Germany also tightened its legislation and expanded the possibilities for criminalizing both refugees and their supporters.

The Geneva Refugee Convention clearly states that people seeking asylum may not be punished for so-called illegal entry.¹

At the European level, work has been underway since Autumn 2023 to renew the relevant legislation. In view of the political situation in the EU Commission, the member states and the European Parliament, we expect the situation to deteriorate severely. Through discussions with politicians, joint statements and briefings, we are working to ensure that the states' penal frenzy is finally brought to a halt.

What could a European sea rescue programme look like? We have a suggestion.

For years, the European Commission has claimed that it has no mandate to implement a European sea rescue programme. Yet there is even a Commissioner specifically responsible for civil protection, crisis management and the coordination of emergency measures.

We have looked at the existing mechanisms and have once again come to the conclusion: a European sea rescue program would be easy to implement. The only reason why it is not is racism. Under the name Mare Solidale² we have formulated how such a programme could look. In combination with a new type of reception me-

chanism, it could save thousands of lives, make it much easier for people to arrive and end the mobilization of border violence for right-wing agitation.

The deaths in the Mediterranean are politically desired and could be ended politically.



sea-watch.org/en/mare-solidale/ ➔

The fascist Italian government is trying to prevent our work!

Under the fascist Meloni government in Italy, the criminalization of civil sea rescue is taking on new forms and threatening our existence.

First of all: Both our ships and our aircraft - like all other ships and aircraft - enjoy the right of free navigation. This means that we are allowed to stay in international waters and in international airspace. Unlike Frontex and the Italian and Maltese authorities, we comply with international law and the law of the sea at all times. This clearly states that **anyone who encounters people in distress at sea must do everything in their power to rescue them and then bring them to a safe port**. So if we come across people in distress at sea on our ships, we rescue them. If we spot people in distress from our aircraft, we alert all ships in the vicinity in the hope that one of them will carry out a rescue.

This is a thorn in the side of the Italian government. It has therefore passed laws that impose conditions on our ships and aircraft. Some of these requirements are in blatant contradiction to current law. One, for example, states that ➔



Photo: Maria Giulia Trombini

¹ Art. 31 Geneva Refugee Convention

² For more details, see: sea-watch.org/en/mare-solidale/

we must sail to an assigned port immediately after a rescue - regardless of whether there are any other boats in distress! **If we were to comply with this order, it would be a direct violation of international maritime law.**

The conditions give Italian authorities the opportunity to arrest our ships and fine us. All they have to do is claim that we have violated the conditions, regardless of whether we have actually done so or not. Ultimately, they can even confiscate our ships and aircraft.

Since the beginning of 2023, ships from the civilian fleet have been detained a total of 26 times (as of the end of March 2025) and ordered by the Italian authorities to remain in port for 640 days - 640 days during which these ships could not be in the area of operation and save human lives!

How we defend ourselves against repressive tactics

Of course, we are fighting against these blockades with every means at our disposal - especially legal means - and are appealing against the decisions. However, legal battles are protracted, especially when they go against the state. It often takes a very long time for hearings and verdicts to be reached. However, both we and other civilian sea rescue organizations have repeatedly achieved successes in court. Courts often find in retrospect that the Italian authorities wrongly accused us of violating the conditions. This means that not only are the regulations themselves a violation of the law - they are also applied completely arbitrarily!

In addition to appealing against the specific stipulations, we are also trying to take legal action against the mere existence of these requirements. Italy's highest court is expected to rule in summer 2025 on whether the conditions as such violate the Italian constitution.

Creating publicity

Informing and mobilizing the public about the consequences of European migration policy - this was perhaps more urgent than ever in 2024. With our public relations work, we not only formulated demands, but also brought people and organizations together to translate solidarity into concrete action. Events and campaigns served as platforms to raise awareness, mobilize supporters and highlight the urgency of our work.

The warning signs are clear

They can be seen everywhere: Warning signs that alert us to danger. But what happens if we ignore them? If we look away until it is too late? With *the warning signs are clear* campaign, we have made the deadly consequences of the European isolationist policy visible. At the heart of the campaign were warning signs that symbolized the risks and dangers that people are exposed to when fleeing across the Mediterranean. On December 7 2024, we presented the campaign with a major action in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. The warning signs were set up there as an installation. Passers-by were able to find out about the situation in the Mediterranean and support directly.

Photo: Tobias Koenig

Ink against Borders

On September 28 and 29 2024, *Ink Against Borders* took place in Berlin - an event that had an artistic and political impact. Tattoo artists from all over Europe came together for this event and donated all their proceeds to Sea-Watch. And *Ink Against Borders* was more than just an artistic act of solidarity: Visitors were able to learn about European migration policy and the work of Sea-Watch in lectures and discussions held by activists. The combination of creative and informative elements made the event a unique platform for engagement and exchange. The campaign raised over 35,000 euros in donations.



Photo: Aoife Brady

Webinars for our supporting members

To keep our supporting members up to date, we organized two exclusive webinars in 2024.

In February, our crew members provided insights into the first operations of the *Sea-Watch 5* and reported on the challenges and successes of our new rescue ship. In November, the focus was on the *Sea-Watch 5*'s first anniversary. Vera, Mattea and Giulia talked about rescue operations in the most adverse conditions, personal experiences on board and increasing criminalization. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and get to know our work behind the scenes better.



Photo: Aoife Brady

Presence at events – reaching people, creating awareness

In 2024, Sea-Watch was directly or indirectly represented at over 135 events in Europe - from festivals and panel discussions to public campaigns. In addition to traditional presentations and information stands, we were also able to count on the support of the music scene in Germany this year: The bands Blond, Kettcar, Deichkind and the artists Marlon Großhardt and Pöbel MC invited us to accompany their tours. This allowed us to reach thousands of people, inform them about our work and make it clear why civil resistance to Europe's isolationist policies is urgently needed.

Fundraising runs in Berlin, Cologne and Munich

Our participation in the half marathons in Berlin, Hamburg and Munich was the most successful campaign of the year in terms of donations. Over 300 runners took Sea-Watch's demands - safe and legal escape routes for all - directly to the streets. With banners and Sea-Watch jerseys, the teams not only ensured visibility, but also made a clear political appeal. In total over 130,000 euros were raised, which went directly to our rescue operations in the central Mediterranean.



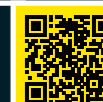
Photo: Kseniya Apresian



Photo: Jonathan Kamzelak

You can also become active and support us with your own fundraising campaign.

Find out more on our website:
sea-watch.org/en/donate/fundraise





Ralf & Inke - Supporting members
Photo: Vincent Bachmann

The Crew

Ten years of Sea-Watch, ten years of solidarity

2025 is a special year for Sea-Watch: we are celebrating our **tenth anniversary!** At the same time, we look back on **ten years of the summer of migration** - a decade in which countless people have made their way to Europe despite the most adverse circumstances. These ten years have been characterized by tireless resistance against Europe's deadly policies of isolation and by struggles in solidarity that have saved lives and given hope.

Ten years in which an idea became a movement: Solidarity knows no borders. During this time, over 47,000 people have been rescued from distress at sea. Made possible by a society of many, by people who support what Sea-Watch does in the central Mediterranean.

With our anniversary campaign, Sea-Watch is focusing on precisely these people: supporters who take a stand in everyday life. They are part of every rescue, even if they have never been on board themselves. They are neighbors, bartenders, grandparents, activists. Some of them are migrants themselves or have had to flee in their lives. They are all part of the crew.

For Inke and Ralf, solidarity begins in everyday life

When the apartment door opens, Inke is standing there - wearing a Sea-Watch-shirt with the inscription: Sea rescue will always be feminist. Her smile is open and direct. Ralf, her husband, makes it easy. No fear of contact, no hesitation - as soon as he arrives, he holds up a newspaper article. It contains a report about Riace, a village in southern Italy that offers people on the move not only protection but also a home. **"They still exist, the good stories,"** he says. And you can feel that he believes in them.

We take a seat at the dining table, coffee is served, the nervousness evaporates. Inke and Ralf speak with enthusiasm, jumping from their children to Ralf's move to Hamburg ("Getting to know Inke was the best thing about it"), from foreign policy to local commitment. At some point, the sentence is uttered: "You have to do something. Something."

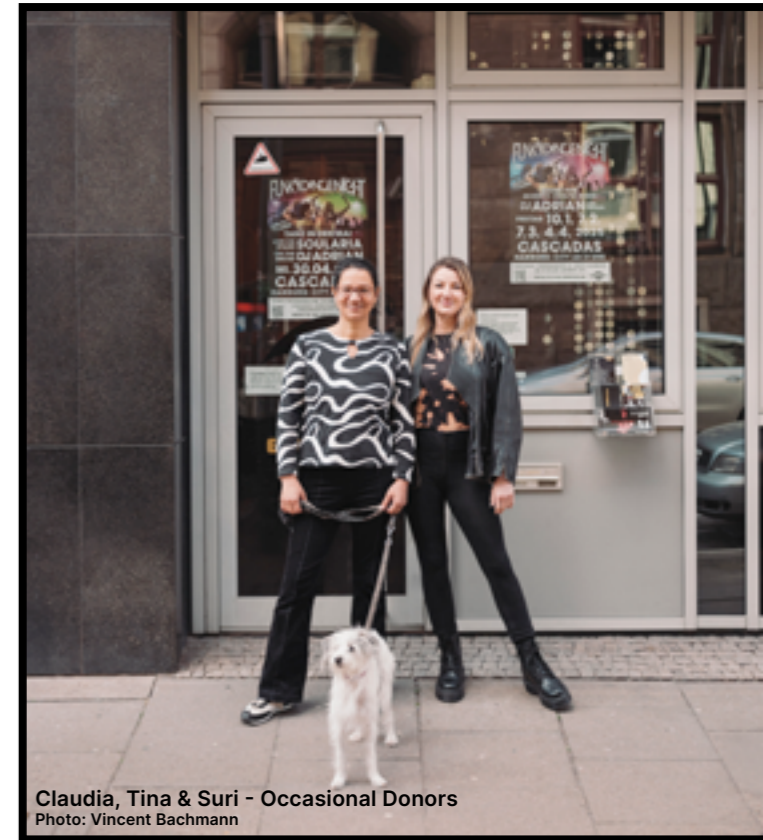
They became aware of Sea-Watch when their daughter ran a half marathon for the organization. Since then, Sea-Watch has become an integral part of their commitment to solidarity. It quickly becomes clear: For Inke and Ralf, sea rescue is far more than a political issue - it is a question of humanity. "For us, sea rescue means first and foremost saving human lives and supporting legal escape routes," says Inke.

Today, she sees sea rescue as one thing above all else: living human dignity. "When people drown while fleeing and we simply stand by and watch, that's a failure to help," says Inke. What is particularly important to them: "For us, solidarity means standing by the side of people on the move," says Ralf. "We could be in a situation like that too," adds Inke.

The two have never been on a Sea-Watch-ship. But they are part of the crew - a movement that shows that solidarity can start anywhere. Even on a couch in Hamburg.

Celebrating solidarity

Surrounded by spotlights, brown leather armchairs and a stage that has hosted many performances, Claudia stands behind the bar at Cascadas. "I'm Claudia, and I'm not a native German," she says. Born in Chile, she came to Germany at the age of seven, then via Würzburg and Delmenhorst finally ended up in Hamburg. On her travels through South America



Claudia, Tina & Suri - Occasional Donors
Photo: Vincent Bachmann

after leaving school, she was particularly fascinated by the live music - bars where there was always something going on in the evening. "I always thought it was so great and at some point I thought: Why isn't that here?" Her future business partner Tina finally had the idea: Let's open our own bar. "We searched for five years," says Claudia, "and then we found this store."

What began as a daily live club soon had to be rethought. Today, Cascadas not only hosts concerts, but also parties, private celebrations - and from the autumn, a new series called *Live in the City*. "Singer-songwriters, soul, jazz, funk - almost anything works here, apart from heavy metal," says Claudia. Music that unites was the idea from the very beginning.

But Cascadas is more than just a place for music: Claudia has also created space for commitment here. A few years ago, she and her friends organized a summer party - instead of presents, there was a donation box for Sea-Watch. "That really raised a lot," she remembers. Since then, donations, especially at Christmas, have been a matter of course for her. "I can't help practically on the ground," she says, "but there are many types of help. For me, it's the donation - and it's great that it's possible."

Between the sky, engine oil and attitude

Michael leans against the open garage door amidst tools and a sky-blue VW T3. "Moin moin, I'm Michael," he says, and you immediately feel familiar with him. He lives in Hamburg, Barmbek, and is now a pensioner. His hands are clasped together, his gaze friendly and alert. "I'm happy that I can be that too - a pensioner, I mean. Now I have time for my hobbies: the bus, the stars ... and my grandchildren. They come to visit us once a week. I'm always happy about them."

Michael was never part of the crew on board - but he is still part of the movement. Over the years, he has supported many organizations, sometimes Doctors Without Borders, sometimes smaller initiatives. Sea-Watch is one of them. "You just look at what's important to you - and Sea Watch is that." Sometimes he donates for two years in advance, sometimes just spontaneously. "Impulsive," he calls it.

He once became aware of the Sea Watch run in Hamburg - later a T-shirt landed in his shopping basket, then a onesie for the youngest member of the family. "She can't read what it says yet - but now she has a onesie with Sea-Watch on it." And there it is again, that subtle transition from the garage to the world situation. Michael follows politics, talks about wars, about people who set off "from one corner of the world to another in order to lead a better life".

"Of course you think about the grandchildren," says Michael. "They have to cope with this world somehow." And because that's not getting any easier, he says, we have to start making it a little bit better today.



Michael - Occasional Donor
Photo: Vincent Bachmann

Ten years of Sea-Watch – a movement of the many

With our anniversary campaign, we are sending out a clear signal: for an open society based on solidarity, against isolationism and fascism. We are showing that our movement is alive and growing. That Sea-Watch is not just an organization, but a huge community of people standing in solidarity. And that we will continue to fight together for a world in which sea rescue is no longer necessary.

The Crew – that's all of us.

Sustainably strengthening and supporting activism

Working for freedom of movement is not an isolated task, but a collective commitment. Activists – whether on board ships, in aircraft, in border regions or in offices – deal with border violence and the resulting human suffering on a daily basis. This is compounded by an increasingly repressive system that makes it more and more difficult for civil society actors to continue to advocate for people fleeing to Europe.

In order to secure their work in the long term, we must both support activists in their personal challenges, as well as strengthen initiatives that fight together with us against Europe's violent border regime. Whether through psychological support or the transfer of financial resources – resistance needs solidarity and can only be maintained through mutual support. ➔



Photo: Leire Motrico

Why we pass on funds to other organizations

While our ships and planes are active, many other actors are working to support people on the move. However, government repression and financial insecurity make it difficult for smaller organizations in particular to continue their work. That is why we use some of the funds entrusted to us to support civilian actors who are active in pursuit of our common goals.

This support is not just an act of solidarity, but a strategic step towards a more resilient and effective movement. By directing resources to where they are urgently needed - be it for sea rescue, legal support, protection of particularly vulnerable groups or the documentation of human rights violations - we can achieve more together.

Below we present all the organizations that received funding from us in 2024. Each of these organizations has applied for the funds in a careful selection process and provides detailed project reports showing how the money is used effectively. In this way, we ensure that our support goes where it is actually needed.

Your support is crucial: with your donations, you not only enable us to remain active ourselves, but you also give us the confidence and opportunity to use our expertise in a targeted manner. This allows us to direct resources to where they make the biggest difference - whether through our own efforts or the promotion of effective projects.

Funding area 1: Sea rescue

Compass Collective (23,190.00 €)

The Compass Collective uses a sailing ship to carry out operations to locate boats in distress and to document human rights violations. The funding covers operating costs for four operations and strengthens the diversity of the civilian fleet in order to work more effectively and be more resistant to criminalization.

Maldusa (26,858.52 €)

Maldusa supports the self-organization of refugees on Lampedusa and documents human rights violations. Maldusa carries out rescue operations with a station and a speedboat on site. The funding covers the operating costs for an operation and helps to make systematic violence at the EU's external borders visible.



Resqship (25,500.00 €)

Resqship uses a sailing ship to search for and provide first aid to refugees. The funding finances personnel costs for ship technicians, maintenance and the introduction of search drones. In the face of increasing repression against civilian aerial reconnaissance, drones are an innovative approach to documenting the loss of life in the Mediterranean even when aircraft have to remain on the ground.

Salvamento Marítimo Humanitario (14,451.18 €)

SMH is one of the last civilian sea rescue organizations in Spain. In addition to rescue operations in the Aegean and Mediterranean, SMH organizes campaigns on human rights violations and criminalization. The grant supports the work of one person in communications management for advocacy and fundraising in order to secure future rescue operations.

Funding area 2: Legal assistance and resourcing

Arci Porco Rosso (15,000.00 €)

The *From Sea to Prison* project supports refugees who are criminalized upon arrival in Europe. The funding enables legal assistance for those affected and strengthens awareness work against the criminalization of flight. The project starts directly where those seeking protection are exposed to particular repression.

Safe Passage Fund (20.000,00 €)

The Safe Passage Fund supports grassroots organizations that are committed to combating systemic exclusion. The funding enables emergency aid for grassroots projects and migrant communities, often outside Europe. The aim is to fund local initiatives in crisis regions that directly support refugees.

Psychological support for activists

A conversation with Bea from the supervision team

Bea is a therapist - she has been supporting activists, volunteers and employees at Sea-Watch since 2019.



"The most important thing for all of us is solidarity with one another"

Our rescue operations and reconnaissance flights are often the focus of public attention. But just as crucial to the success of our work is the mental health of our activists - at sea, in the air or on land. Since 2019, Sea-Watch has a Supervision and Psychological Support department that supports all teams in the areas of mental health and work organization. It forms the basis for sustainable activism and promotes a culture of open exchange about stresses and conflicts. ➡

Psychological support at Sea-Watch - how can one imagine that?

Bea: Working in sea rescue can be extremely stressful - not only because of the operations themselves, but also because of the reports of those rescued and the daily confrontation with the dying in the Mediterranean. Feelings of responsibility and powerlessness can lead to stress, team conflicts and even burnout. Psychological support helps in coping with these stresses.

More than 100 psychological counselors work for Sea-Watch on a voluntary basis. Through this pool, every person at Sea-Watch - whether on the water, in the air or on land - can receive counseling, coaching or therapy within a few days. In acute cases, we can organize crisis talks within 24 hours.

What else is part of your work as a supervision team?

Bea: Briefings before and debriefings after the operations are an important part of this. The crew reflect together on how they can deal with stress and traumatized guests in the best possible way. There is also a buddy system whereby two people support each other and regularly check in with each

other. After the assignments, stressful situations are dealt with and discussions are held on how to return to everyday life successfully.

Stress not only arises individually, but can also be structurally anchored in an organization. That's why we help teams to think about their internal processes. We offer workshops and moderation in order to better manage challenges and create sustainable work structures.

Our work even goes beyond Sea-Watch: in 2024, we received requests from 18 other organizations - we support the entire search and rescue community, both in their operations and at an organizational level.

A major project last year dealt with the prevention of burnout. What exactly was it about?

Bea: That was an internal Sea-Watch project. We carried out surveys in all the teams to find out specific stress factors in the very different areas of work - from problems in the flow of information to the stress caused by shift work.

In workshops, the teams developed solutions to make their work more sustainable and less stressful. As a

supervision team, we supported this process with recommendations and practical tips.

What would you like to pass on to all people in civil sea rescue?

Bea: Always have the courage to seek support! It makes me optimistic to see that psychological support is now a matter of course at Sea-Watch. It is not perceived as a weakness, but as an essential part of our work.

In the end, one thing counts above all: We have to support each other and keep reminding ourselves that we are not alone. **Solidarity is our strongest resource!**

Create transparency

Ten years of civilian sea rescue in the Mediterranean. Ten years, and the media only seems to talk about people on the move when it plays into the hands of right-wing narratives. Solidarity with refugees is dwindling, while other crises dominate the media landscape. Anyone who stands up for people seeking protection, speaks out and denounces abuse is increasingly confronted with criminalization and repressive tactics.

The winds have changed, and this also represents a huge burden for the financing of civilian sea rescue. In 2024, donations for people on the move recorded a sharp decline.

The "hype" surrounding civil sea rescue has also collapsed. It requires more and more resources - whether human or financial - to draw attention to the Mediterranean, to attract and retain people as donors in the long term, and thus to maintain the commitment to human rights.

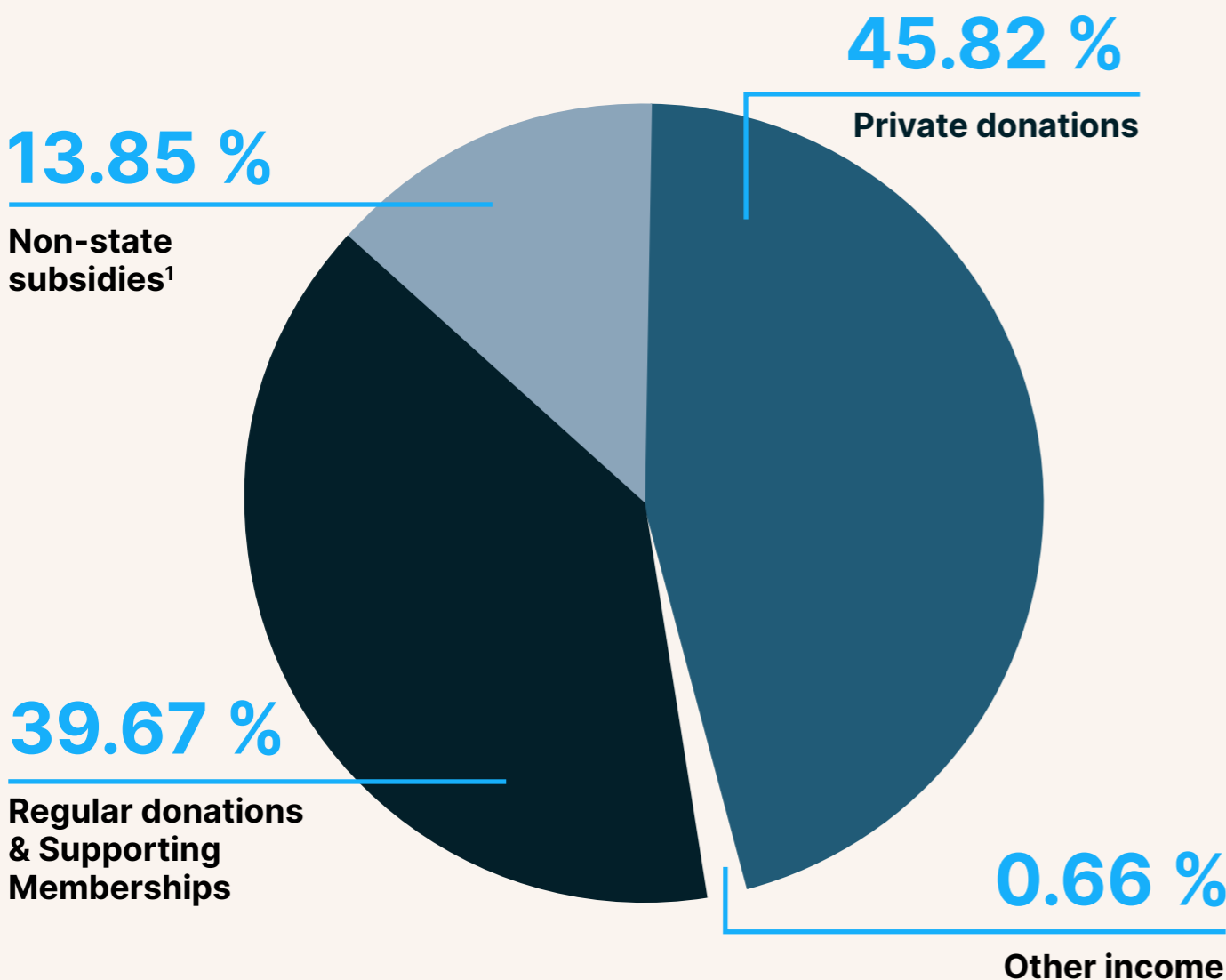
But 2024 has also shown: Where fascism grows stronger, resistance grows. Where human rights are attacked, protest forms. Where there is a demand for help, there is support.

Despite the enormous challenges, we were able to increase our donation-based income in 2024 - a strong sign of the continued solidarity of a growing community.



Revenue overview 2024

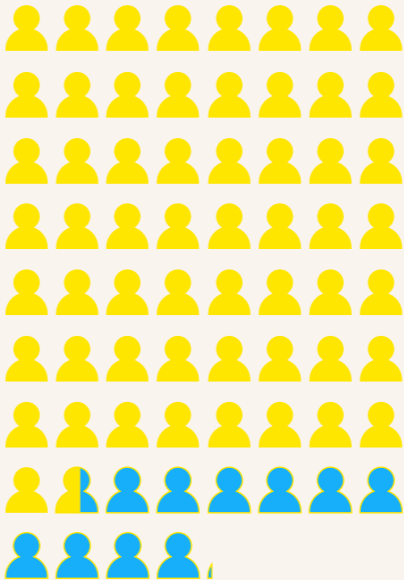
€ 12,278,305
Total donation income



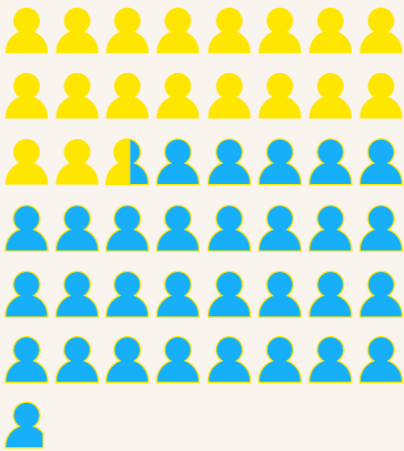
¹Non-state subsidies:
Postcode Lottery Germany: 1,500,000 €
Gemeinsam Retten e.V.: 200,000 €

905,531 € we also took
through the sale of merchandise.

We also received legacies in 2024, the proceeds of which cannot yet be definitively presented in figures due to complex accounting processes. These will be listed transparently in the final annual financial statements.



34,044 donors have supported us with a supporting membership or regular donation.
5,263 of these donated regularly for the first time.



24,434 donors have supported us with one or more single donations.
15,086 of them donated to us for the first time.

corresponds to 500 donors

58,478 donors



"In times when government repression and the criminalization of our work is part of our daily routine, our donors make it possible that we continue to stand up for the rights of people on the move - loud, independent and unwavering. For this I am deeply grateful!"

Hanna, Head of
the Fundraising
Department

Expenditure overview 2024

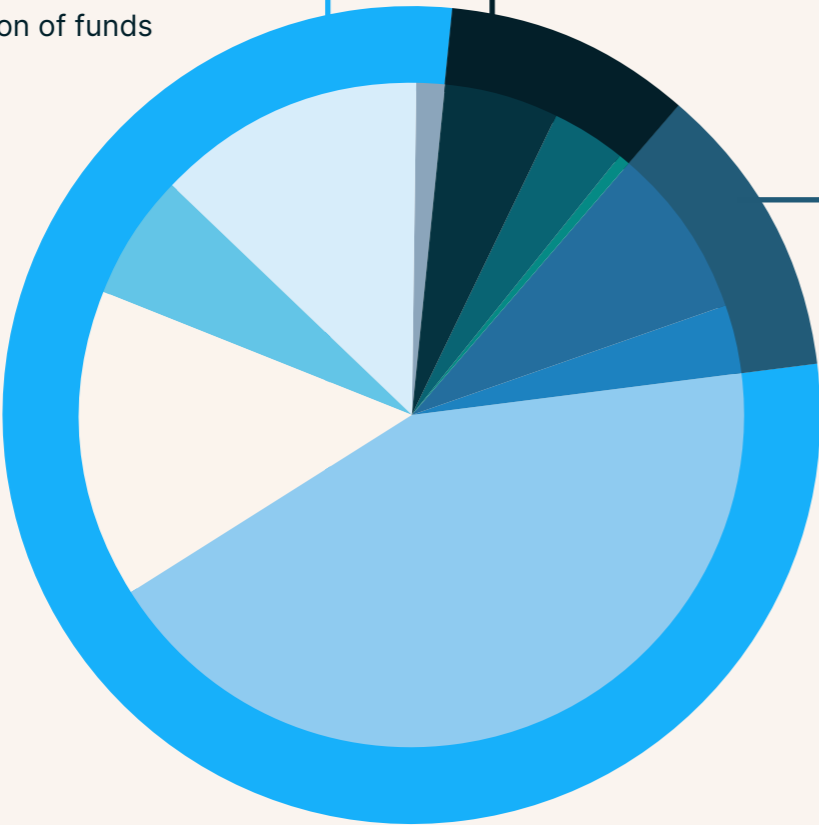
€ 12,995,676.37
Total expenditure

78.36 % Projects

- 42.85 % Rescue ships
- 14.98 % Civil aerial reconnaissance
- 6.20 % Media/PR, advocacy, events
- 13.14 % Project support
- 1.19 % Passing on of funds

9.93% Administration

- 5.72 % Organizational coordination and development
- 3.61 % IT & Financial accounting
- 0.60 % Other administration



11.71 % Donor acquisition and support

- 8.35 % Acquisition of new donors
- 3.36 % Donation Administration

Expenditure for operational work:

In 2024, we used 10.2 million euros for statutory tasks: 5.6 million euros of this went towards the operation of our rescue ships *Sea-Watch 5* and *Aurora* as well as the medical team, crew training and ship IT. 1.9 million euros were used for our civilian aerial reconnaissance. 1.7 million euros were spent on project support, and 0.8 million euros on media/press, advocacy and events. We passed on 154,000 euros to other organizations.

Project support:

Various projects on land support and accompany our rescue operations on the water and in the air, and are therefore essential for their implementation. These include the supervision team, ship management and logistics, the crewing team, operational coordination and our Italian team.

Passing on of funds:

We are delighted that we were able to support other civil organizations in 2024. On pages 38 and 39, you can find information on why we do this and which projects we supported last year.

Organizational coordination and development

This cost item includes the Executive Board (acts strategically and operationally), the People, Culture & Organization department, the Berlin office and strategic development processes for the entire organization.

IT and financial accounting

The IT infrastructure ensures that our communications and data are processed securely and reliably, especially in a politically repressive environment. Financial accounting ensures that all financial transactions are processed transparently and properly in accordance with legal requirements.

Recruitment and support of donors

The work of our Fundraising department is crucial to securing our projects in the long term. In 2024, we had to invest more resources in order to acquire new donors as well as continue to reach and inform existing donors. Fundraising means not only raising funds, but also providing information about our work through mailings, newsletters, annual reports and webinars - an important part of our public relations work.

For every euro spent on fundraising and administration, we collected 8.14 euros in donations.

Cost breakdown of our rescue ships and reconnaissance aircraft

| Cost center | Sea-Watch 5 | Civil air reconnaissance | Aurora |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Personnel costs | € 1,652,028 | € 705,299 | € 455,010 |
| Travel expenses & meals | € 274,429 | € 169,120 | € 109,536 |
| Room costs | € 81,225 | € 31,117 | € 43,621 |
| Equipment | € 100,385 | € 3,614 | € 32,581 |
| Maintenance | € 835,452 | € 560,518 | € 287,204 |
| Operating costs | € 715,976 | € 422,090 | € 98,927 |
| Legal and consulting fees | € 7,199 | € 4,000 | € 2,358 |
| Insurances | € 87,835 | € 0 | € 2,655 |
| Communication | € 53,732 | € 30,501 | € 19,991 |
| Other | € 63,272 | € 20,676 | € 18,012 |
| Total | € 3,871,533 | € 1,946,935 | € 1,069,895 |

Why such high personnel costs on our ships?

An average of 30 people were permanently employed on our ships in 2024. Some positions on our ships (e.g. officers, electricians and engineers) must be manned all year round - even in port. This is stipulated by the German flag. We can only guarantee this continuity through paid permanent positions. In addition, it is not always possible to find volunteer activists for individual positions for our operations.

The figures in this report are provisional. We have received confirmation from the tax office that there was a delay in the audit of our past annual financial statements, but that our association has always met its tax declaration obligations on time.



Carlotta - machinist on the Sea-Watch 5.
Photo: Selene Magnolia

Commitment 2024

Sea-Watch is made possible by a community of many who support and carry on our vision in various ways.

58,478 supporters from over 30 countries worldwide have donated to Sea-Watch.

18,660 of them donated to us for the first time.

541 online fundraising campaigns were organized for Sea-Watch.

823 companies, organizations and foundations have supported us with donations.

94 churches have given us their collections.

135 events throughout Europe were organized for or with Sea-Watch.

574 people have taken part in our exclusive webinars.

331 runners ran a half marathon for us in Berlin, Munich and Cologne.

16,171 purchases were made at the Sea-Watch store.

41,500 new followers were gained on our social media channels.

1,900,000 interactions took place on our social media channels.

It is encouraging to know that all these people are on our side and stand up for solidarity and human rights.

Organizational structure at Sea-Watch:

Transparent and coordinated decision making

Sea-Watch is a growing organization that responds to a variety of tasks and challenges. With a clearly structured organization, we promote transparent and coordinated decision-making that ensures the long-term success and efficiency of our work. We have established different levels and bodies to ensure that all decisions are made in line with our vision and values.

Departments and Teams

16 departments and teams at Sea-Watch are responsible for the implementation of ideas and actions. They take care of the planning and implementation of projects and tasks. Each team is represented on one or more councils and works closely with other departments to achieve the goals set.

Councils

The various departments meet in four councils to discuss the following topics: Ships, Aircraft, Organizational Framework and Public Relations. These groups meet regularly to make decisions that are important for their respective areas of responsibility. They act as experts and decision-makers in their areas and ensure that Sea-Watch's operational needs are effectively addressed.

Council Assembly

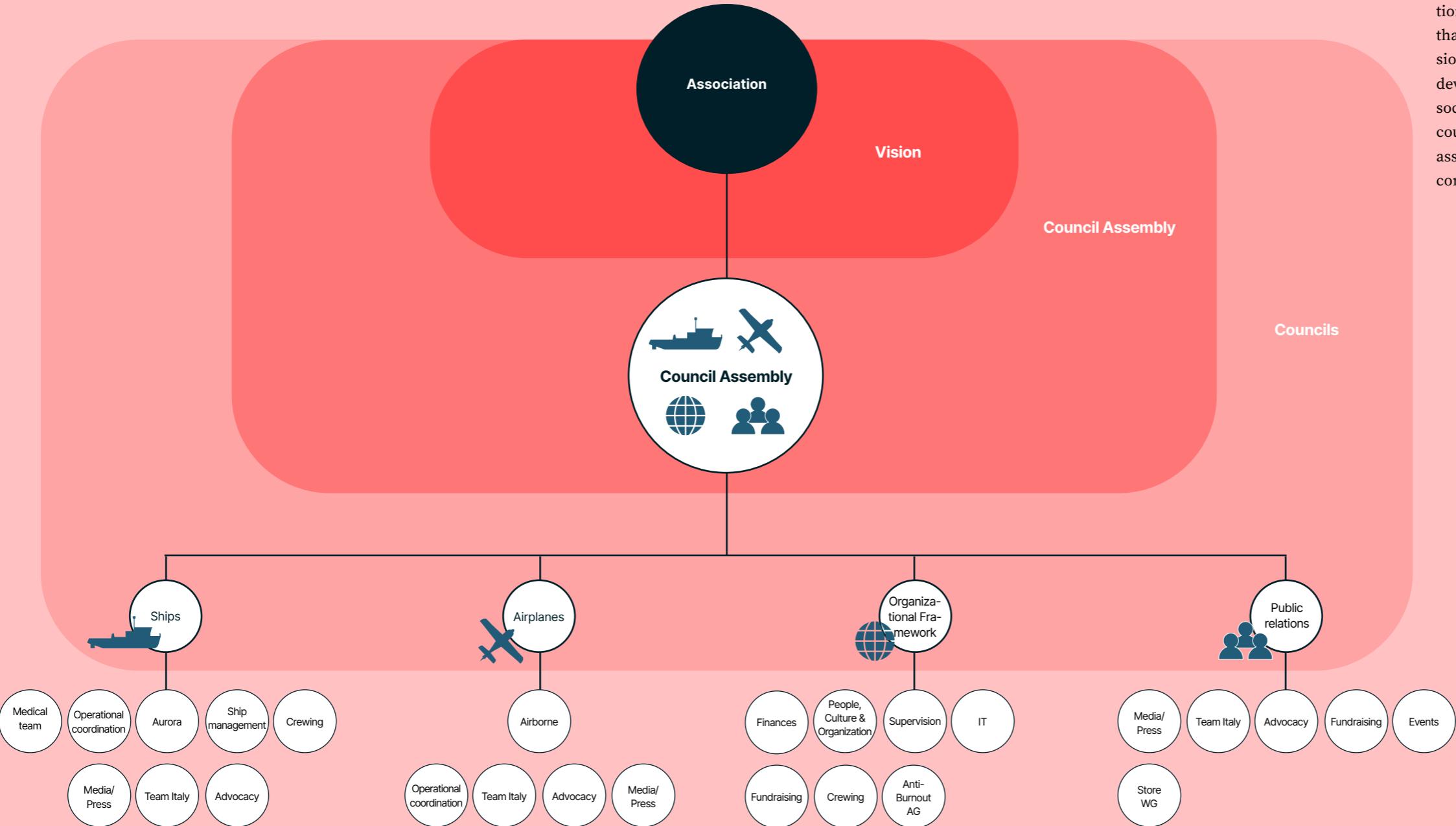
The Council Assembly is made up of representatives from the four committees. It is responsible for cross-organizational decisions, such as setting budgets, goals and guidelines. The Council Assembly ensures that Sea-Watch's operational activities are in line with the organization's long-term goals.

The Executive Board

The Board, which is elected by the association, represents the organization and the association externally and ensures that all decision-making processes are carried out in accordance with the defined goals and values of Sea-Watch. The Board plays a key role in the strategic direction and support of the Council Assembly and ensures that its decisions are integrated into the overall strategy of the organization.

The Association

The association forms the basis of the entire organization. It formulates the vision of Sea-Watch and ensures that all decisions and actions are in line with this vision. The members of the association contribute to the development of the vision and elect the board. The association is represented by the Executive Board in the councils and in the council assembly. Members of the association can attend individual council meetings to contribute their perspectives and points of view.



Testamentary donations – a life-saving decision

We have been active in the Mediterranean for ten years now, and the issue of sea rescue remains just as urgent as it was on day one. In recent years, many people have rallied behind us in a community of solidarity. But how can this work be continued in the future? One source of income that has become increasingly important to our organization is will donations. To gain an insight into this sensitive topic, we spoke to Irina. She is responsible for legacies at our organization and explains why it is so important to deal with the issue of your own estate planning.



Photo: Oliver Kulikowski

Irina, you deal with legacies at Sea-Watch. Why is this topic so important to us?

Irina: In recent years, testamentary donations have become an important source of income for us. They enable us to maintain our work in the long term and to ensure that we can continue to fight against the deaths at Europe's borders in the future. Inheritances reach us without deductions, which makes this form of support particularly effective. We often receive large sums of money, which gives us particular financial stability.

Is there a hurdle for people who are thinking about their will?

Irina: One's own legacy is naturally a sensitive topic. Many people associate it with thoughts of their own death, which is often not so easy. But it is precisely because of this that it is so important to deal with. It's not just about leaving something behind, but about doing something for the lives of others beyond your own life - and that is a very special form of solidarity.

How can people remember Sea-Watch in their will?

Irina: It's actually quite uncomplicated: Anyone who would like to consider Sea-Watch in their will can do so using a simple online tool on our website. There you will find a free, secure and legally recognized way to draw up a will. For anyone who would like a personal consultation, I am also available to answer any questions.

Why is Sea-Watch a good choice for a testamentary donation?

Irina: Testamentary donations are a way of shaping the world according to certain ideas, even beyond your own life. A will donating to Sea-Watch is not just a financial contribution, but a statement. It is about standing up for a world in which people on the move are not left alone and in which human rights apply to everyone. This is not only important for us as an organization, but above all for all those who are in search of safety and a better life.

How is the money used?

Irina: Every donation in your will goes towards our work, which directly supports people in flight. Whether through our ships that rescue people from the Mediterranean or our reconnaissance flights that document human rights violations, it flows into everything that is needed to draw attention to the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean and bring about change.

What would you like to pass on to people who are thinking about this?

Irina: All I can say is that a legacy is a way of leaving something positive in the world. Something that will save lives in the future. Anyone who includes Sea-Watch in their will is making a long-term contribution to a fairer world - and that is something to be proud of.

Would you like to find out more about this topic? Then we look forward to a personal exchange!

Irina Enderle

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Website: sea-watch.org/spenden/nachlass (currently only in German)

Phone: +49(0)157 92485187

Availability: Monday to Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Photo: Lennart Diesen



A huge THANK YOU!

Our year 2024 would not have been possible without you. This is a huge thank you to everyone who stood up against borders, oppression and injustice, and put up resistance.

To all activists: You were everywhere - on the ships, in the aircraft, at events and on the streets. You acted where it was urgently needed. Your tireless work and dedication are the backbone of our rescue operations.

Our supporting members and donors: Your support is far more than financial aid. It is a strong statement against Europe's brutal isolationist policies and secures our independence. Without your continued support, we would not be able to act in the long term.

We would also like to thank our partners:

A big thank you to the German Postcode Lottery, whose particularly generous support enables us to continue our vital work in the Mediterranean. Thank you to all participants in the charitable social lottery, without whom this would not have been possible. Thank you to the team for the many years of cooperation, for your partnership and your trust in our work. Especially in times like these, your support is more important than ever!



A big thank you also to United4Rescue for the ongoing financial support and the tireless reinforcement of the civilian fleet. And for an ever-growing alliance that does not leave people on the move to their fate.



We say thank you – after an eventful year 2024, whose operations would not have been possible without your support.
Photo: Geraldine Morat Hofmaier



If you too would like to take a stand against the deadly policies of letting people die by becoming a supporting member, you can find more information here!

sea-watch.org/en/donate/supporting-member/ ➔



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Our operations on the water and in the air are financed by donations. **In order to continue our work, we are dependent on your support. Thank you very much!**

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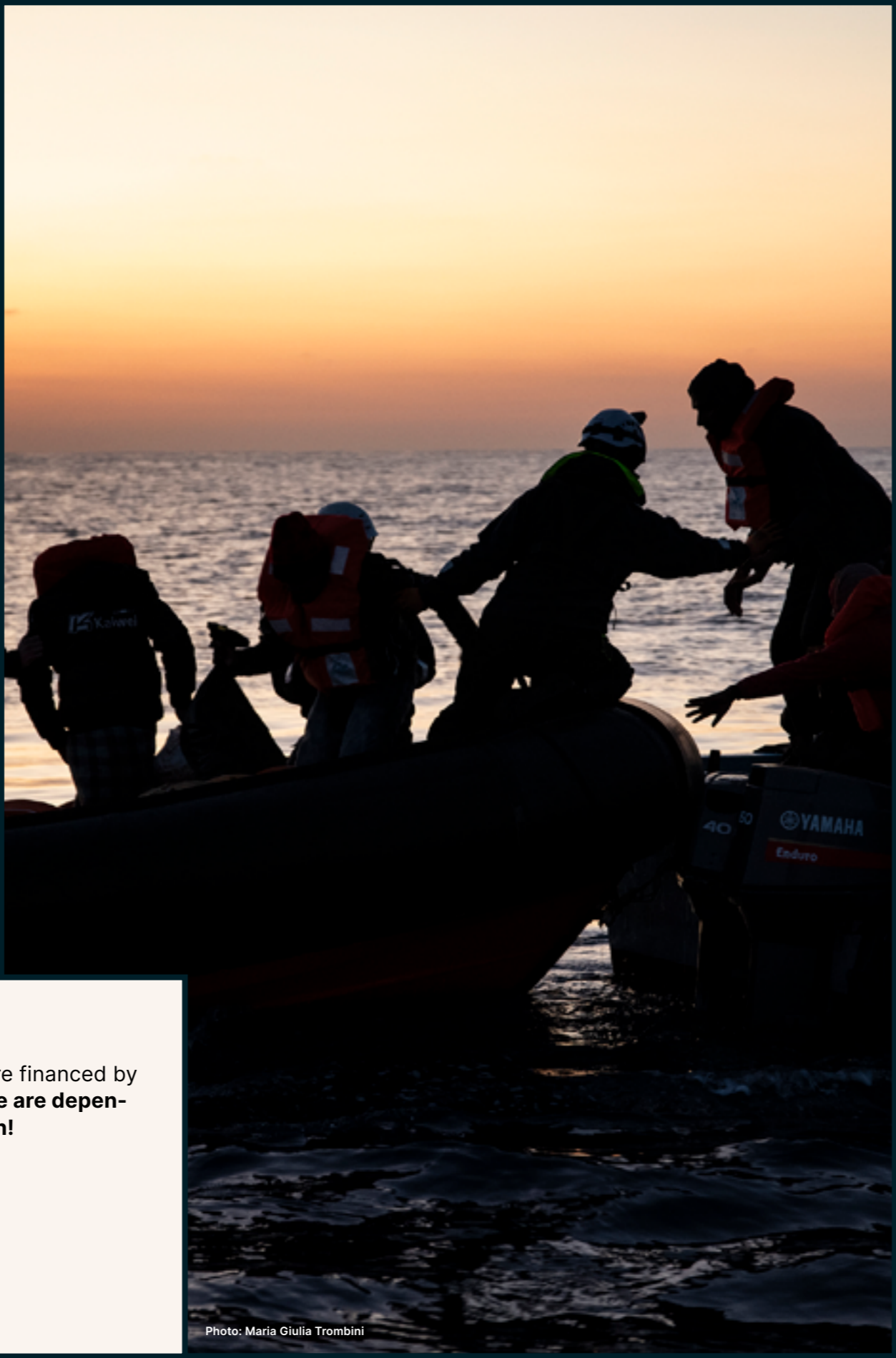


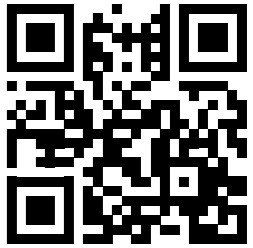
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Photo: Marta Mamon

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