

News

Civil society calls for Catalonia to become a land of welcome



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“Casa nostra casa vostra” campaign poster. One of the campaign’s goals is to show the human side of the refugee crisis.

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Campaign logo.



The initiative came from a group of people working in the field of communication who met at refugee camps along the border between Greece and Macedonia.

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The campaign has been possible thanks to the involvement of more than 300 people and the support of organisations and companies.

The campaign “Casa nostra, casa vostra” (Our home is your home) aims at encouraging Catalan institutions to take action in light of the migration crisis.

“Catalonia has always been a land of inclusion, but we must not forget that in many occasions throughout history we have also been welcomed in other lands”. These are the first lines in the [manifesto](#) of “**Casa nostra, casa vostra**”, a campaign launched by several civil society actors and organisations in the Catalan cultural sector that wish to put the discussion on migration in the Mediterranean on the table.

The campaign's main goal is to get Catalan institutions to take the initiative to welcome refugees. The aim is to **call on the administrations**, even when many of the actions are to raise awareness among the population. “We hope to turn Catalonia into a land of welcome. For this we will need a **clear and firm response from its citizens** so as to foster a change in attitude in the institutions with regards to the refugee crisis in Europe,” says [Lara Costafreda](#), an illustrator and one of the persons leading this campaign.

An act of denunciation arising from the experience of volunteering

The seed of this initiative was planted in the **refugee camps** on the border between Greece and Macedonia. There, a group of independent people working in the field of communication met on 9 May, Europe Day, while they were engaging in professional or **volunteering** projects. One of these people is [Rubén Wagensberg](#), a high-school teacher and communications professional: “When we came back it was clear to us that we had to denounce what we had seen and that we had to do something to change the situation”.

The campaign was made possible thanks to the involvement of **more than 300 people with the support of organisations and companies**. “Many people want to support the campaign through their work, i.e. contributing their skills and competencies. This has helped the campaign to grow rapidly”, as explains Lara Costafreda.

From the migration crisis to the refugee crisis

With “*Casa nostra, casa vostra*” the aim is to focus on the **refugee crisis** in the Mediterranean. We denounce the EU policies that by closing the borders have wiped out any safe ways into Europe and have contributed to people entering the Union irregularly, the business of the mafia and the death of up to 4,000 people drowned in the sea in 2016 so far.

At the same time, we criticise the Spanish State for failing to meet its commitment, signed in 2015, to take in 17,337 people in two years. So far, Spain has only taken in 5% of the above figure. We also point out that, “using the excuse of the political blockade in Spain”, **the Catalan administrations have not yet given a response.**

The goal: raise awareness and put pressure on the institutions

As Lara Costafreda explains, the aim is to reach out to a broad sector of population, especially those who are not yet aware of the situation. “We try explaining the **causes that lead a person to forcefully leave their country.** Also what the **consequences of not welcoming them in our countries** are. We try [debunking myths](#) and answering questions”.

To do this, not only will there be conferences and workshops held in schools, high-schools and civic centres; there will also be a documentary series titled “**Vides Aturades**” (Lives on Standby) portraying five people living in the Vasilika refugee camp in Greece. This programme aims at **shedding light on the issue**, which is always portrayed in the media in a depersonalised way.

We have also planned two large events to give visibility to the campaign: a **concert at Palau Sant Jordi** on 11 February and a large **citizen march** on 18 February to close the campaign.

How can people collaborate with the campaign?

- Signing the **manifesto** on the campaign's [website](#).
- [Mentioning the campaign](#) on social networks using the hashtags [#CasaNostraCasaVostra](#) and [#VolemAcollir](#).
- Participating in the **mobilisation week** that will take place from 10 to 17 December.
- [Organising an activity](#) within the framework of the campaign.
- Making [financial contributions](#) or buying campaign [merchandise](#).
- Going to the concert at **Palau Sant Jordi** on 11 February or to the **citizen march on 18 February**.

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