

**PILOTES  
VOLONTAIRES**



# PILOTES VOLONTAIRES



## ABOUT US

We are private citizens who are motivated to act for the following reason: the Mediterranean Sea has become one of the world's great cemeteries of people seeking asylum. Thousands lose their lives every year while the world looks on, indifferent. In 2018 the number of people who drowned while attempting to cross increased drastically. According to the United Nations, an estimated one in fifteen people died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that more than 2,262 people have died in 2018. As professional pilots, we believe that we have a responsibility to do our part to provide support to rescue operations, in the form of aerial observation, to help better identify boats in distress. Thanks to your donations, we will commit to participate in this global momentum of human solidarity aboard our plane, the Colibri (French for Hummingbird).

José Benavente  
co-founder of Pilotes Volontaires.

***«We're alone with our small means, but we try to fly as often as possible to save these people. We cannot let them die at sea.»***

Benoît Micolon,  
co-founder of Pilotes Volontaires.



## OUR ACTION CONTRIBUTE TO SAVE MORE LIVES

Pilotes Volontaires is a non-profit association, funded by private donations, whose mission is to identify people in distress in the Mediterranean Sea.

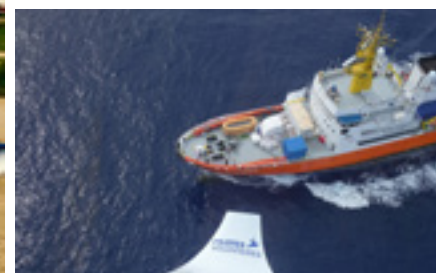
We provide aerial observation support to the maritime relief humanitarian organizations present on the zone. The Mediterranean crossing is a major route used by people who, fleeing terrible and inhumane conditions, wish to reach the European continent. Their attempts are being made under appalling conditions, in which the prospect of death at sea is almost certain.

In coordination with the MRCC (Maritime Rescue Coordination Center) in the designated Search and Rescue Zone (SAR zone) we fly aerial observation missions and communicate the geographical coordinates of the identified crafts in distress to the MRCC, who has a legal obligation to ensure that the people rescued are disembarked «in a port of safety».

## ADVOCACY

Since June 2018, Libya, a country at war and in the midst of the worst crisis in its history, a country where basic human rights are not guaranteed, has created its own Search and Rescue Zone with support from Europe. The Libyan Coast Guard is now officially responsible for coordinating sea rescues off their territorial waters. The main problem with this situation is that survivors who are intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard do not land in "a port of safety", which is in violation of the Hamburg International Convention on rescue operations at sea. The survivors are instead brought back to the hell of Libyan detention centers where acts of torture, systematic rape and the sale of human beings are proven and widely documented by international organizations. At the same time, rescue actions carried out by NGOs that have already saved thousands of lives in the Mediterranean and wish to continue to operate in strict compliance with international law are increasingly being treated as criminals and prevented from acting by European authorities. We are calling for:

- A clear framework for intervention that guarantees strict compliance with the various international conventions.
- That NGO rescue boats be allowed to intervene without interference as efficiently as possible, without having to wonder if they will be forced to remain at sea for days and days before they can disembark the rescued survivors in a port of safety. These days spent wandering at sea are days during which more lives could have been saved.



## ZONE OF INTERVENTION

# OUR PLANE

Limited to an area of approximately 150 by 50 kilometers, the preferred area for our observation flight missions is located in international waters, 25 nautical miles from the Libyan coast.

This search area can be extended, restricted or relocated depending on the evolution of the situation and the routes used by the asylum seekers. Pilotes Volontaires operates an MCR 4s four-seat single-engine aircraft, which offers excellent visibility. Capable of flying up to 2,000 kilometers per flight, its fuel economy, about 10 flight hours, allows us to stay in the area for long aerial observation missions.

The Colibri (French for hummingbird), owes its name to the Native American legend of the obstinate little bird that, drop by drop, tries to put out a huge forest fire. As tiny as it is, it does its part.

## OPERATIONS

From our base located an hour's flight from the search area, we can conduct patrol missions lasting up to eight hours. A Head of Mission manages the general logistics of the base, coordinates the departures and arrivals of crew, and plans the maintenance of the aircraft.

The crew of air reconnaissance missions consists of at least one pilot in charge of the conduct of the aircraft and an observer who prepares and coordinates the missions. During the flight, the observer communicates with the ALO (Air Liaison Officer), who monitors the mission from the ground using a tracking software specially developed for our needs.

The ALO is responsible for contacting the emergency services if the crew spots a craft in distress. The ALO also assists missions by sending them other information, including weather conditions.



## THE PILOT BENOÎT MICOLON

Fascinated by aviation, Benoît spends the majority of his time of his time in the air, for work or leisure. A B-747 airline pilot and has accumulated more than 6,000 flight hours Benoît brings the aeronautical expertise necessary for the smooth running of Pilotes Volontaires' flight operations.

Few things could distract Benoît from the sky until his friend José from pilot training school a few years back, contacted him asking him to join his volunteer pilot project.

Since then, when not flying professionally, he devotes the majority of his time to Pilotes Volontaires.

## THE HUMANITARIAN JOSÉ BENAVENTE

With 25 years of experience in humanitarian aid, José brings his expertise and experience gained working in many countries affected by armed conflict. He is trained in the field of Humanitarian Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and in Humanitarian Air Operations.

For him the plane is above all an essential tool for travelling in and around difficult to access regions, and in 2006 José obtained his commercial pilot license.

The idea of an air intervention at sea has long interested him: "Fifteen years ago, we were already talking about shipwrecks during crossings between Senegal and the Canary Islands... It is not acceptable for people to drown in general indifference when attempting desperate crossings... It was necessary to try to do something..."

## VOLUNTEERS

Today, José and Benoît have been joined by around other volunteers. They are responsible, within their respective competences, for the organization and management of the implementation of observation missions, communications on social media and press relations, the search for donors and the organization of fundraising events, and the development of the association's website.

# LOGISTIQUE OPÉRATIONNELLE



SAR ZONE  
INTERNATIONAL WATERS

# PILOTES VOLONTAIRES



## OUR ASSOCIATION BY THE NUMBERS

(as of 2 June 2019)

- Association founded **January 2018**
- Airplane acquired **April 2018**
- First mission **May 12 2018**
- First sighting of boats in distress **May 12 2018**

- Members **14 volunteers including 8 pilots**
- Donors **3000**
- Average cost per mission **Between 1000 and 1500 euros**
- Operational overview **52 missions - 54 boats sighted**
- More than 4,300 people rescued.**

NATIONAL WATERS

# PILOTES VOLONTAIRES



[www.pilotes-volontaires.org](http://www.pilotes-volontaires.org)



By using their own funds to pay for the acquisition of their aircraft, Pilotes Volontaires' two co-founders were able to quickly begin aerial missions.

This citizen's initiative continues today thanks to private donations (95%) and the generosity of charitable foundations.

We rely on your financial support to continue to remain active and provide indispensable aerial observational support to NGO boats who are trying to save lives in the Mediterranean.

Learn more [info@pilotes-volontaires.org](mailto:info@pilotes-volontaires.org)  
Support us [donations@pilotes-volontaires.org](mailto:donations@pilotes-volontaires.org)  
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