

Campaign: Push Back Frontex! Against a new dimension of left-to-die-policy at sea

February 2015 – the german version of this call can be found [here](#), the french, italien and spanish version can be found [here](#)

In a letter from the 9th of December 2014, Klaus Rösler, director of Operations Division of Frontex, called upon the Italian Ministry of Interior, the navy and the coastguards to stop the current practice of rescuing boat-people in distress at sea. After the termination of the Italian navy operation Mare Nostrum which rescued the lives of more than 120.000 people, and at the beginning of the Frontex operation Triton, Rösler attacked the authorities in Rome for assigning vessels to move “into zones outside the operational area of Triton” in order to assist vessels in distress. This “would not correspond to the operational plan” and not every SOS-call needed to be acted upon, Rösler continued. As one of the directors of Frontex, he points to the responsibility of the Libyan coastguards which, as is known, do not exist for many months anymore due to renewed war-like conflicts. In other words: Klaus Rösler has unambiguously appealed from a top position of the EU border agency to let many refugees and migrants die in situations of distress at sea.

Frontex was founded exactly 10 years ago. Already since its first operations at sea in 2006, the agency stands for an aggressive politics of deterrence. In order to polish its tarnished reputation, Frontex purported in the past years to observe refugee conventions, human rights and the law of the sea. This now, once again, proves to be a merely cosmetic measure, a dishonest image campaign for an agency that, since 2005, acts as the driving force of the EU border regime. Besides the operations along the sea- and land-borders, Frontex is a significant part of the training and technical armament of border police forces, the externalisation of borders through cooperation with third countries, the creation of and the participation in the border surveillance system EUROSUR, the border control operation Mos Maiorum, as well as brutally executed charter-deportations.

In the current crisis in the central Mediterranean Sea, Frontex wants to enforce that the 25 vessels and 9 airplanes of operation Triton would be employed only within the 30-mile-zone off the Italian coast. The explicit aim of Triton is the reduction of arrivals at European coasts and the deterrence of boat-refugees. Over the last months, WatchTheMed's [1] recently launched alarm phone for migrants has supported the rescue of several boats that were located precisely in the zone that Frontex demands to abandon. The hotline-teams have been in direct contact with boatpeople who would no longer be alive if Frontex's left-to-die policy would have been applied. The situation necessitates a determined response of civil societies and all social movements: Let us stop these inhumane policies, let us defend the rights of refugees and migrants!

Moreover, it is sheer mockery that Frontex, in January 2015, accused people smugglers of a “new dimension of cruelty” when several crews of so-called ‘ghost ships’ abandoned the vessels to avert criminalisation. Without doubt, there are unscrupulous profiteers of the lucrative trade of escape via the Mediterranean Sea. However, it is clear that the business with illegalised entry and the thousandfold death at sea are products of the EU border regime. Both could become history by tomorrow if refugees and migrants were able to simply buy ferry- and plane-tickets and travel as safely and cheaply as tourists.

As long as the freedom of movement for all is not a reality, deaths at sea can only be prevented if all people in distress are rapidly rescued everywhere, also off the coast of Libya! We demand the immediate withdrawal of the murderous Frontex order. We aim for an Euro-Mediterranean

space that is not characterised by a deadly border regime but by solidarity and the right for protection and freedom of movement.

[1] [Watch The Med](#)

First signatures:

Networks Afrique-Europe-Interact, Borderline Europe, Welcome to Europe, FFM, Berlin; All Included, Amsterdam, Flüchtlingsrat (Refugee Council) Hamburg, Stiftung (foundation) :do