

25th of February 2015 | “Push back Frontex! Against a new dimension of left-to-die-policy at sea”

Press Release and Invitation to a Demonstration in Berlin on the 25th of February at 8.30 a.m. at the BCC at Alexanderplatz

Klaus Rösler, director of Operations Division of Frontex, will talk on the 25th of February 2015 at 9.30 a.m. at the international Police Congress in Berlin about European border control. We take this as an opportunity to protest against left-to-die-policies at sea, which Frontex tries to put into practice in the name of the EU. The demonstration is the first action of a campaign “Push back Frontex!” which was launched by the organisations undersigned below.

In a letter from the 9th of December 2014, Klaus Rösler 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” (which means beyond the 30 nautic miles area around Italy) 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 (1). “By saying this, 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” says Helmut Dietrich of the Forschungsstelle Flucht und Migration (FFM).

Over the last months, WatchTheMed’s (2) 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. Conni Gunsser from one of the hotline teams reports: “We have been in direct contact with boatpeople who would no longer be alive if Frontex’s left-to-die policy would have been applied”.

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’, allegedly not seaworthy, were said to have abandoned the vessels. Following research conducted by reporters of the German TV station NDR, these claims of Frontex turned out as deliberate false statements, at least concerning the case of the vessel “Blue Sky M”. But Frontex sees no reason to re-consider its public relation policy and to correct its false statement. This “shows how far Europe’s border guards are going in their propaganda battle against ‘illegal migration’”. Obviously they want to repudiate their responsibility for the deaths of many refugees, and put the blame on the smugglers” (3) 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 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.

We demand the immediate withdrawal of the murderous Frontex order!

Let us stop these inhumane policies, let us defend the rights of refugees and migrants!

Remarques:

- (1)
<http://www.euractiv.it/it/news/sociale/10459-triton-frontex-a-italia-troppi-interventi-fuori-area.html>
- (2) <http://watchthemed.net/>
- (3)
<http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2015/Fuehrungsloses-Fluechtlingsschiff-Wie-Frontex-die-Wahrheit-verdreht-,schleuser164.html>

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Initiators:

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

More information:

- <http://afrique-europe-interact.net/>
- <http://www.borderline-europe.de/>
- <http://ffm-online.org/>