

Our Network

Afrique-Europe-Interact is a transnational network that was founded at the end of 2009 and is working exclusively on a voluntary basis. It involves grassroots activists, especially in Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Tunisia, Morocco, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands – among them numerous self-organised refugees, migrants and deportees.

Afrique-Europe-Interact follows two main objectives: On the one hand, we support refugees and migrants in their struggles for freedom of movement and equal rights – whether in the countries of the Maghreb, on the Mediterranean or within Fortress Europe. On the other hand, we are involved in social struggles for just and self-determined development. In this regard, the right to global freedom of movement and residence is only one side of the coin. No less important is the right to stay, i.e. the opportunity to live at home or in one's country of origin under safe, dignified and self-determined conditions.

Looking back

Afrique-Europe-Interact was founded in the context of the preparation of a three-week “Caravan for Freedom of Movement and Just Development”, which took place at the beginning of 2011 on the initiative of the AME (Association of Malian Deportees): Around 250 activists, most of them from Mali, took part in the bus tour from the Malian capital Bamako to the 11th World Social Forum in Dakar/Senegal. This included numerous actions and meetings with the local population along the route. After the caravan, the social upheavals in North Africa first kept us on our toes – not only out of solidarity with the Arab Spring, but also because hundreds of thousands of migrant workers and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa had to flee Libya, which had been hit by (civil) war. This has resulted in numerous contacts and joint projects between European, Malian and Tunisian grassroots groups, including Afrique-Europe-Interact's solidarity campaign for the Choucha desert camp on the Libyan-Tunisian border – an initiative that played a major role in enabling 200 refugees from Choucha to leave for Germany in September 2012. Since 2012, the work of Afrique-Europe-Interact has expanded enormously both geographically and in terms of content. Although the focus is on Mali (at least most of the people are active there – including numerous farmers) activities of Afrique-Europe-Interact are also taking place in all the countries mentioned at the beginning of this text. We are also regularly active in various networks and alliances where often only a few of us are actively involved. This is especially the case at conferences, events and panel discussions.

Against dominance and Eurocentrism

What unites us fundamentally (in spite our different priorities) is the conviction that current conditions of neo-colonial dominance and exploitation can only be changed if social grassroots movements from Africa and Europe work together on an equal, firm and direct basis on a large scale. However, this requires that the different points of departure, interests and self-images must be carefully considered. In this respect, not only the (self-)critical engagement with dominance, paternalism or racist or Eurocentric prejudices plays a central role for Afrique-Europe-Interact. Furthermore, it is important that the member groups of Afrique-Europe-Interact in Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso and Guinea, as well as self-organised refugees and migrants in Morocco and Tunisia, receive small-scale financial support from Afrique-Europe-Interact's European section – in short: a practical approach to redistribution!