**Ferries for All**

Towards an open Mediterranean space!

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**About the Campaign**

The slogan “Ferries not Frontex” emerged in the days following the 18th of April 2015. More than 800 men, women and children drowned in the Central Mediterranean Sea. Only one week earlier, about 400 people had lost their lives in a similar tragedy. A tragedy? No! It could have been anticipated. The mass dying was a direct and foreseeable consequence of the EU border regime. And the dying continues. This border regime has a clear symbol: Frontex, the EU’s border agency.

In the first months of 2015, this agency proposed and insisted that rescue operations should be limited and that, instead, all resources and capacities should be mobilised for border control. Deterrence and death, selection and deportations. Frontex is the pacemaker for an inhumane politics. Calling for ferries represents the opposite of what Frontex symbolises: Ferries would guarantee safe and legal passages, and function like mobile bridges to connect three continents separated by the sea.

A simple way to open the borders for everybody and to stop the death at sea immediately.

Ferries not Frontex is thus a vision for an open Europe and a political demand for the here and now.

After 18th of April 2015, as a direct reaction to the mass death, we considered launching a big push in order to pick up refugees and migrants in Libya. It would have functioned also as a symbolic action of protest and civil disobedience against the deadly border regime, organised by wide alliance of civil society actors. In the end, it was not possible to realise this idea due to security reasons and the lack of funding. But the idea remained vivid and active at the same time.

This开放式 movement (OSM) sent large rescue vessels into the Central Med. Since then, and in correspondence with the incredible and ongoing struggles for the freedom of movement by refugees and migrants mainly in the Aegean Sea and on the Balkan route during the summer and autumn 2015, more and more refugee-welcome initiatives emerged within and beyond Europe. In September and October 2015, the mass movements’ capacity to break through various borders pointed to the possibility of an open Europe at least for a few months.

At the present time, in February 2016, forms of repression and control, as well as racial parties and propaganda appear on the rise once again. This is at the cost of the cost of lives: Will it create new walls and rigid borders? Will it create a path into a different and open Europe for those who are arriving, and also for those of us who are already here? We probably have to expect contentions all over Europe in the coming months, and especially so along the external sea borders. Our campaign and this newspaper seek to contribute to these remobilisations of deadly Europe-an borders and, at the same time, want to offer a prompt and concrete alternative: Ferries not Frontex!

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**Nowadays the Mediterranean Sea is the deadli- est border zone of the entire world. More than 3,700 men, women and children died in 2015 in this area.** That is almost five times more than in South East Asia and even 12 times more than in the US-Mexico border region. Already tomorrow this mass dying at the southern EU-border could become history! It's a more political decision to entitle everybody to access commercial ferries and to suspend the cruel EU-visa regime. Nobody would be forced to take a rubber boat anymore and to risk their lives to reach Europe. However, death at sea is part of an inhuman deterrence policy. It is a crime against humanity, nothing else. And, one day, the responsible politicians should be brought to justice for these ongoing acts of killings and policies of letting die ...

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*If refugees could use a ferry, a father would not have to witness his children, and a wife witness her husband drowned in front of their eyes.*

N. from Afghanistan, who had to cross the Aegean Sea even a second time after he was deported.

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As Alarm Phone project we are in contact with travellers in distress at sea every day. In 2015, we were in direct and indirect contact with more than 1,200 boats in all areas of the Mediterranean Sea. We try our best to support these people during this dangerous part of their journeys but we know, that our project never can be a solution. We see ourselves as a necessary emergency intervention and together with a lot of other projects of civil society we can counter the deadly effects of the EU border regime.

Without the civil rescue operations at sea, by Medecins Sans Frontieres, MSF, Sea-Watch and others, and those on land, by the many ‘bay watch groups’ and volunteers along the coasts of Greek islands, and without migrant community groups that accompany people at sea, as well as other activists who, like us, are ready to work day and night to respond to emergency calls, most certainly, thousands more would have drowned in the past year.

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*If you ask for ferries and open borders, everybody might come to Europe and our social systems will break down* – this is the main justification voiced by politicians, in the mainstream media, by big parts of society in many European countries to retain the current visa regime, which translates into denied access to ferries and results in the mass death at sea. But how convincing is this argument? Who is afraid of an open Mediterranean area? Why can we not perceive this ocean as a real bridge between Africa, Asia and Europe? As a free and common space for mutual exchange and inspiration, on a social and an economical level?

The vision of a free space obviously does not work within a capitalist system which is based on inequality and hierarchies and which needs borders to create differences of exploitation. The upper and middle classes fear to lose their privileges and parts of the northern population retreat into imaginations of racially pure nation-states and their supposed superiority. The hypocrisy is obvious: “Our” social system – as far as it is still exists in face of austerity poli- tics – and “our” higher wages – as far as they are not attacked by increasing precarity – are built on (neo)colonial structures and hyper-exploita- tion along transnational chains of exploita- tion.

And from arms trade to land grabbing, from climate change to the destruction of local economies; you hardly find reasons for flight and migration in the global south that are not caused by the global capitalist players and politi- cians of the global north. Yet collaboration with corrupt elites in the south is common practice, too. Also in the poorest countries we can find “islands of richness in an ocean of poverty”. In January 2016, it was pointed out once again: the 6% richest people of the world own more than half of the population on this globe. It must be clear for everybody who opens their eyes: we do not have a “refugee and migra- tion crisis” but one of justice and the (re)distribu- tion of wealth.

However, the false argument, ‘everybody will come, if borders are opened,’ is nothing new. It was already used in northwest Europe, when the EU enlarged to the East and South. But reality was and is different. Certainly, many people from the global south would come to the north if freedom of movement was to be a reality. But, at the same time, many would also return if they were not trapped by complex asylum sys- tems. Many people would oscillate between their city of origin and other places in the world to build further social and economic relation- ships. Temporary or circular migration might become a wider global phenomenon, but both, the right to go and the right to stay, should be options for everybody and everywhere.

To sum up: for us, struggles for the freedom of movement and global social justice are strong- ly interconnected. We still believe that another world is possible. But it has to be a world with- out borders.

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(1) according to UNRWA, a state dependent agency for refugees management
(2) published by the independent civil organization Visa

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For the Freedom of Movement and Equal Rights for All!
Campaign Newspaper from the transnational Project http://alarmphone.org
In the winter of 2014 the newly created Alarm Phone became operational between Morocco and Spain. On the 4th of December, 29 people on their way from Nador to Almeria, including five children, were stuck on the board for more than 48 hours in the icy sea. Although the Spanish rescue service, coupled with the Spanish NGO Caminando Fronteras and the Watch The Med Alarm Phone, conducted a search and rescue operation, they came too late and could only rescue 58 of the 57 persons on board. One of the migrant activists affiliated to the transnational network Afrique Europe Interact, connected to the Alarm Phone, knew some of the victims. These are the words he wrote to commemorate the children:

“their story is now the story of all of us. Their parents, Siso and Magui were stuck in the dead end road which Morocco has become. So they decided for the fortune of their children to take the future in their own hands and to start the dangerous journey to a new life… Hope and fear might have been the emotions which troubled their hearts until the accident happened. 28 human beings were swallowed up by the waves, two of them were the twins of Siso and Magui. They were loved by everybody and made everyone around them. Today we are without them. They rest stars in our memories.”

Migrants trying to reach Europe from Morocco can take different routes: the poorest try to jump the fences into the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The risk of being beaten up by Moroccan auxiliary forces (a special unit of the Moroccan police created in order to protect the borders and known for their brutality and paramilitary structure) or Spanish Guardia Civil is high. As is the danger of being injured by the merciless barbed wire, intended to cause serious wounds. These injuries have often been the reason for migrant deaths, since those injured were not treated in hospitals but routine medical operations were performed in one of the Moroccan prisons. This is also the most lucrative business for traffickers and it would not be possible without the cooperation of police members on the Moroccan side. Although the Moroccan police and the military operation EUNAVFOR-Med against “smugglers”, which began in June, as the gruesome discovery of dozens of migrants bodies on Libyan shores in October showed. Over the Christmas days, almost 1,000 boat people were rescued by the Italian coastguard. The Alarm Phone published a press release and launched a campaign against this policy of Frontex and Rösler, who held speeches in Berlin in February and again on the 22nd of April, defending his position. Protesters made Frontex responsible for an increasing number of deaths in the Mediterranean. In May 2015, some ships as well as boats of private organizations (MOAS, MSF, SeaWatch) were sent to the Central Mediterranean to take part in rescue operations. Frontex and the military operation EUNAVFOR-Med against “smugglers”, which began in June, were unable to prevent that about 250,000 migrants arrived in Europe’s borders in a very effective way. The Moroccan government got payed millions of euros for a trip, European passport holders without the cooperation of police members on the border. According to many testimonies, there is a huge business going on between smugglers and corrupt police forces: traffickers know when these officers are on duty, they arrange a car and agree on signs so that these cars will not be controlled. Mahmoud Traore is the author of the book “Partir par cent cent” (set of 100 to report) and was a migrant in Morocco himself who managed to arrive in Spain where he lives now. On a lecture organised together with Noborder, Mahmoud showed the power of the Alarm Phone, he puts special emphasis on the constant accusations from Spanish Guardia Civil to justify their violent push-backs of migrants on the fences of the exclave of Ceuta and Melilla. A civil European on the other side, it makes him uneasy when he hears the word human trafficking applied to the traffickers who are the mafia: “…this guy (an Indian refuge he spoke to) paid both authorities to enter Europe’s borders in a very effective way. He took advantage of the coincidence of the beginning of spring and tried to put pressure on European coastguards to rescue them. But due to the end of the Italian navy mission “Mare Nostrum” in November 2014 and the launch of the Frontex operation “Triton” with the aim to prevent the arrival of migrant boats rather than to rescue them, there was a lack of rescue capacities in the Central Mediterranean Sea.” The latter lost twelve migrants to death. In a big operation: So called operation Hera, combined with direct deportation of arriving migrants by collaboration with countries of origin and transit, was quite successful in blocking this route and many West Africans got stuck in Morocco. In the last years Morocco has taken over and been playing its role in securing Europe’s borders in a very effective way. The Moroccan government got payed millions of euros for a trip, European passport holders without the cooperation of police members on the border. According to many testimonies, there is a huge business going on between smugglers and corrupt police forces: traffickers know when these officers are on duty, they arrange a car and agree on signs so that these cars will not be controlled.

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In Italy, the first hotspot exists on Lampedusa, where in December 2013 many Eritreans who protested against being forced to give fingerprints were put into detention. A second hot-
spot was established in Trapani/Milos on Sicily. From both camps, most of the people who were not accepted as refugees, were just thrown out on the streets with the order to leave the coun-
try, and in Trapani they were taken in again only after protests of NGOs. Frontex is also present in Pozzalo, a harbour town on Sicily, where many boats arrive, and where a third hotspot opened on January 19. “Doctors with-
out Borders” (MSF) have denounced the poor and unattended state of this emergency camp and stated that until the Italian authorities im-
proved services at the camp and recognised the dignity of the migrants, MSF would not col-
laborate with them. More hotspots are planned in Porto Empedocle, Augusta and Taranto. Frontex officers are responsible for “screening” (trying to find out the nationality and origin of migrants) and “de-
briefing” (questioning migrants about their routes, smugglers etc.). Deportations organ-
ized by Frontex are already taking place from Lampedusa directly via Rome to Nigeria. In Sicily, people from the Maghreb are detained or thrown out on the streets without chance to apply for asylum. In October alone, 153 of them were deported to Egypt and Tunisia. Frontex is also involved in negotiations with non-EU countries to take back their nationals and pre-
vent them and also transit migrants from coming to Europe. To prepare and observe such kinds of agreements is the task of liaison of officers of Frontex, sent to countries of transit and origin of migrants.

Deaths on sea, push backs, hotspots, detention and deportation – there are a lot of reasons to protest against Frontex and to demand the freedom of movement for all. The fight against “smugglers” will not prevent people from try-
ing to cross the Mediterranean Sea, but only increase the number of deaths. The only viable alternative is to establish a humanitarian ferry that safely transfers people out of Libya and to allow all of people to use the existing fer-
ties from Tunisia to Italy.

In Europe, many harsh plans seeking to gain back control and to close the borders are cur-
rently being discussed. For example, there is the idea to establish a direct flight-route and to deportations from the Greek islands back to Tur-
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ple, while in fact saving the lives of those in distress.

After mourning the losses, toward the end every memorial ceremony, these are the only words left to say: We all feel ashamed in the moment when we hear about and face these deaths because we failed in our attempt to stop this murderous regime and to create a welcom-
ing Europe. They had been on the way to change their lives on their own. Their deaths were the deaths in search for freedom. And that concerns all of us. We will never forget them. We prom-
ise to go without rest to tear down the borders that killed them.

Let’s take a look into the future: the killing of refugees at European sea borders will probably be seen as one of the biggest crimes against humanity and human rights that were committed by Europeans in this decade. Mere-
ly in the Aegean Sea with its relatively short dis-
tances between the Turkish mainland and the Greek islands, more than 400 people lost their lives. It is the many more without the strong engagement of human rights activists. These activists, mainly of Syrian and Iraqi origin ex-
sisted a system of supporting to accompany boats with technologies such as WhatsApp in order to be able to alert in situations of dis-
stress. Also, diverse civil society actors that started to engage in the rescue missions, such as Médicina Sin Fronteras, Sea-Watch, MOAS, as well as Spanish life guards.

One thing is certain: all of these deaths could have been avoided if the ferry-lines between Turkey and Greece would be accessible to everybody, in the wake of Migrant-shipments. Galinis, someone who clearly cannot be re-
garded as a radical human rights activist, de-
manded the opening of the Turkish-Greek land border or at least a ferry connection to step the unbearable situation that again and again dead children, women and men are found on Lesvos’ beaches or recovered by the islands’ fishermen. Instead, the European solution so far consists of attempts to strength-
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fector: many people now try to escape Turkey more quickly so as to bear the possible closure of borders, even in weather conditions that bring them into life endangered situations at sea. The numbers of arrivals on Greek islands were higher in December than in August 2015, and in the first two and a half weeks of January alone, more than 35,000 people crossed the sea.

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What can be more convincing than a reality check? The amazing and successful struggles for the freedom of movement last year in the Aegean Sea and on the Balkan route proved impressively an old thesis from the antiracist movement: without borders and visa-controls there’s no “human smuggling”! In the long “summer of migration” when the border regime was overrun in September 2015, we clearly saw that the so-called smugglers got imme- diately unemployed. Who could doubt that? As soon as the refugees and migrants reached the Aegean islands and were able to travel through the broken borders by public transport – first with commercial ferries to Piraeus, later on with buses and trains through the Balkans towards Germany and Scandinavia – they nev- er needed to make use on clandestine and ex- pensive “agencies” anymore. Of course, none of our volunteers would use the same dangerous routes from Greece to Italy on small boats at sea or hide in closed trucks at risk of suffoca- tion when there were other, open ways.

The AP is an emergency intervention that explicitly supports the many ex- isting migration struggles against a brutal and re- pressive EU border re- gime. It seeks to assist those who (had to) travel on increasingly precarious migration routes. In the past decade or so, dangerous sea crossings have often become the only remaining cor- ridor to enter Europe, costing thousands of lives. The AP understands itself as a component of the uncompromised freedom of movement for all and stands opposed to forces of migra- tion control and management.

The project is actively involved in all three re- gions through which migrants and refugees attempt to reach the countries of the EU: The Aegean Sea (between Greece and Turkey), the Central Mediterranean Sea (between Libya/ Tunisia and Italy), and the Western Mediterranean Sea (between Morocco and Spain).

The AP is organised as a self-organised call- center, carried out by about 120 activists from 13 countries. Most of them have been active at the external borders of Europe for many years, in networks as mentioned below. The project is independent and financed through donations.

The number of the AP is disseminated mainly through direct contacts with migrant and refu- gee communities, also in the important transit countries of Northern Africa and in Turkey, through multilingual visitor-cards and by so- cial media.

In the short term, the project focuses on rescue missions and the prevention of human rights violations. The death of refugees and migrants at sea could already be a matter of the past if the border- and visa-regimes were dissolved. Insofar, the project aims to create a Mediter- ranean space of mutual solidarity, with open bor- ders for all people.

Afrique Europe Interact

Afr-Interact is a small, transnationaly organised net- work, that was founded in early 2011 and com- bines the struggle for the freedom of movement with the demand for a just development. http://afrique-europe-interact.net

Boats4People

The mobilisation of 14 organisations in 7 coun- tries created to defend the rights of migrants at sea. www.facebook.com/boats4people

Voix des Migrants

VdM is an initiative organised by and for mi- grants to document the situation of mi- grants and refugees and to sensibilise and mo- bilise them to fight for their rights.

www.voixdesmigrants.com

Welcome to Europe

w2eu demands the freedom of movement and provides information to refugees and migrants that might be useful on their journey to and through Europe. The general webguide in 4 languages: www.w2eu.info

Moving Europe

ME was founded in the autumn 2015 to sup- port the struggles of refugees and migrants along the Balkan route.

http://moving-europe.org/

“Frontex produces the smugglers…”

How the border regime creates the market of illegilised migration

Everybody is possible, everything can be transformed by strong social movements! Through our Alarm Phone project and during this incredible year of successful struggles for the freedom of movement, we learned this lesson once again. Tests, documents, interviews, pictures. After one year Alarm Phone; Acts of Disobedient Lis- tening; The telephone ring ≤ Shift de- scription. We are not a solution; We use our memories to take decisions; People would always call me on my private phone; To come better through their lives; We can- not call our project a success; I had to transform my trauma; A vision of transna- tional society in practice; Western Med: Acts of Repression and Resis- tance; Polit- ical developments in the Central Med; Ae- gean Sea: The transformation of a border region; Beyond Borderlines…

“Frontex is needed to hunt the criminal smug- glers and traffickers”, “more or less every day this dominant discourse is spread by politi- cians and the mainstream media” - they repeat this barefaced lie. It is nothing than another at- tempt to justify the deadliest border regime of the world. In fact, however, it is exactly the op- posite: For 30 years or more, the intensifi ed attempts to justify the deadliest border regime of this dominant discourse is spread by politi-

Call out – smartphones urgently needed in Western Med!

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Especially between Mor- occo and Spain we often encounter difficulties to locate boats in distress because most of the people are neither carry satellites phones nor smart- phones, which they could use to send their GPS coordinates. Since the people in distress cannot indicate their actual position, search and rescue missions take much longer than they could have done and are more difficult. Many people lose their lives in the Strait of Gibraltar. They are forever lost; A vision that there is no legal and safe way for them to reach Europe!

The Alarm Phone will collect as many smartphones as possible and distribute them in Morocco, alongside with creating awareness for the importance of GPS data for rescue operations. If it is possible for you, please collect smartphones in your town, spread this Call Out-smartphones urge- dly needed in Western Med!...