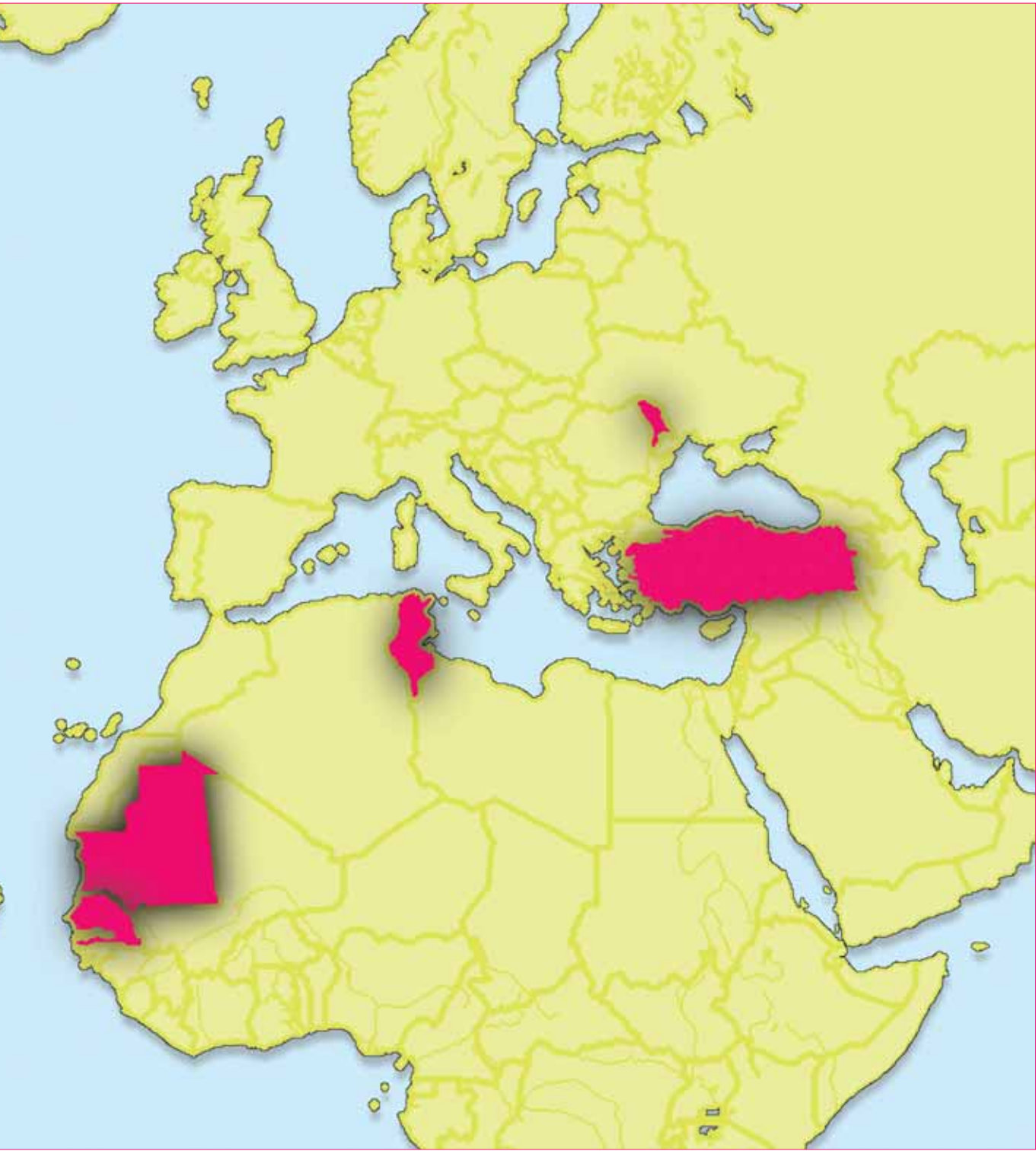




# IN THE SHADOW OF THE CITADEL

THE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEAN  
MIGRATION REGIME ON „THIRD COUNTRIES“



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# Preface

## DEAR READERS,

When refugees and migrants stand at Europe's external borders, the humanist values that all of Europe likes to invoke are quickly rendered meaningless. While human rights apply universally and are virtually sacrosanct in Europe, they are systematically ignored and frequently denied to refugees on the borders of the states belonging to the European Union or those closely associated with it.

It is not only since the tragic deaths of 360 people off the coast of Lampedusa on October 3, 2013, that Europe's external border has appeared like a cruel barrier. Since 1998, more than 19,000 people have died on Europe's external borders; 14,500 of those in the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and in the coastal waters of Mayotte, a French island in the Indian Ocean. Countless more die of thirst on their way to Europe in its bordering deserts, drown in rivers, or fall victim to the violence of criminal and corrupt networks.

The governments of the European legal space deny entry to asylum seekers and turn back desperate people. Refugees are criminalised, taken into custody and denied access to the labour market and reliable health provision. Even those wishing to come to Europe for but a brief visit are often not welcome. Rigid implementation of visa policy makes it especially difficult for people from poorer parts of the world to visit us. These are all dramatic consequences of European migration and refugee policy.

However, European control of refugee- and migration movement does not start at Europe's external borders, but reaches far beyond. By trying to control and influence the immigration and emigration policies of its bordering states, the European Union has virtually created an extraterritorial zone of isolation and containment of fleeing and migration beyond its borders.

The following studies on Senegal, Mauritania, Tunisia, Turkey and the Republic of Moldova exemplify what is taking place in the shadow of the European citadel. They demonstrate how the guidelines and extraterritorial interventions of the European counter-migration measures close down spaces previously open for transit and temporary stays, how these spaces are transformed into prison-like locations for refugees and migrants, and how social cohesion and sustainable potential for development are undermined in the populations involved.

Migration is an integral part of human development. Especially in this age of globalisation, mobility and freedom of movement are universal rights worth standing up for. During the course of the first half of the 19th century, about 500,000 people emigrated from Germany to America, the 'New World'. Many of them were not just looking for a better life free from poverty and deprivation, but fled Germany for lack of religious or political freedom, or following the 1848 revolution. We should not forget this history when we see today's refugees coming here across the seas. The search for a safe life is often preceded by an experience of violence, legal incapacitation or deprivation.

Europe must begin to actually and effectively honour its duties to human rights in its migration and refugee policies. There must be no more deaths at Europe's external borders and targeted push backs to so-called 'third countries' have to stop.

A first step in making possible proper standards in human rights would be equitable negotiations of truly fair conditions and potentials of migration. This, however, does not merely require different policies, but a combative and engaged general population which itself is willing to make the European border more permeable. It is an imperative of solidarity – one that applies especially to human rights and relief organisations such as ours, working for fair participation of those excluded.

Refugees and migrants on our doorstep are not only frequently victims of injustices and violent circumstances; they are also the protagonists of a global demand for inclusion. They follow the dream of being able, as foreigners, to make a home anywhere in the world. Let us follow them, let us walk with them, let us learn from them.



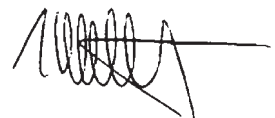
**Brot für die Welt**

Pastor Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel  
President



**medico international**

Thomas Gebauer  
General Manager



**Stiftung PRO ASYL**

Günter Burkhardt  
Chairman

The articles collected here are the result of years of involvement of the participating organisations in the countries investigated. These studies would not have been possible without local partner organisations and transnational networks of solidarity that tirelessly work on the ground for the rights of migrants and refugees and in many cases support them by providing practical aid and assistance. We would like to express our deep gratitude to them.

The texts are extracts from considerably more detailed and substantial reports on the effects of European counter-migration measures. Our perspective on the effects of European policies is necessarily Euro-centric; we are, however, aware that a perspective from the South would not concentrate exclusively on Europe.

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# Summary

OVER THE COURSE OF THE PAST 14 YEARS, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EXPAND THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE UNION'S EXTERNAL BORDERS. THIS INCLUDES NOT ONLY THE TECHNICAL UPGRADING AND SECURING OF BORDER AREAS BY FRONTEX AND EUROSUR, BUT AN INCREASING RELOCATION OF SECURITY MEASURES TO BORDER-, TRANSIT- AND HOME STATES. THIS INVOLVEMENT OF THIRD COUNTRIES IN EUROPEAN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT HAS MEANT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE STATES HAVE BEEN BROADENED BY THE ADDITION OF AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT; IN SOME CASES THE BATTLE AGAINST MIGRATION HAS ALL BUT DOMINATED RELATIONS AT CERTAIN TIMES.

The involvement of third countries in the expansion of European migration control comes at a price. It was traded in for concessions in a number of other areas, such as co-operation in development, the turning of a blind eye to human rights violations, the international recognition of authoritarian regimes, and the large-scale financing of security measures by the European Union or individual states. Measures to externalise European migration control ultimately have led to social changes in bordering- and transit states, impacting negatively not only on the situation of migrants and refugees, but on the nations' populations themselves. The following findings of our studies illustrate such effects of European border and migration policies on third countries.

## VISA POLICIES

The Schengen Agreement inaugurated broad systematic control of Europe's external borders. The increasing homogenisation of control practices, issuing of visas and immigration regulations, along with a tendency to impose stricter conditions and ever more surveillance, increasingly immobilise the less well-off, the not quite so highly skilled, and those who do not fit into Europe's statistical desirability profiles and are deemed not to 'belong' here. The Union's 'blacklist' of countries whose nationals require visas comprises mainly African and Asian nations. By now this blocking of migration and fleeing does not take place only in Europe and along its borders, but is carried deep into Africa and Eastern Europe. Europe seeks to impose its blacklists on the transit states. Only Turkey sees itself as strong enough to counter European interests with its own visa regulations. With its significant obstacles on immigration, European border- and visa policy curbs transnational mobility and thereby inhibits social, political and even economic dynamism and innovation in both home- and transit nations, and the EU itself. Even when taking very high risks, refugees and asylum seekers have very little chance of reaching European territory. In many cases it is the weakest among those seeking refuge who literally fall by the wayside, as they do not possess the strength and the capital to reach the European border.

## VASSAL STATES

In the documents and treaties that record the results of a whole series of conferences between the European Union and its neighbouring states, there is talk of a 'discourse on equal terms' and 'shared responsibility'. In reality, concessions in the joint 'battle' against migration cannot be imposed, but have to be negotiated. Empty phrases such as 'discourse on equal terms' in truth only serve to obfuscate existing differentials of power. In these negotiations, weak states such as Moldova, whose government is driven by the desire to align itself as closely as possible with Europe, or Tunisia, which is to a significant extent economically dependent on Europe, are degraded to mere vassal states, who are only given vague assurances in exchange for their efforts in combating migration. In most border-, transit- and home nations, the European Union and some member states mainly invest money in the reinforcement of the security apparatus of these frequently autocratic regimes

**1986** Schengen: The removal of internal border controls is the start of intensified European co-operation on the external borders.

**1999** In Tampere, the Council of the European Union decides a five-year plan concerning asylum, border control and integration.

**2002** Seville: The Council of the European Union decides to make the granting of development funds conditional on co-operation in the fight against irregular migration.

**2004** In The Hague Programme, the Council agrees on an area of freedom, security and justice based on a joint external dimension of migration and asylum policy.

**2004** Foundation of the European agency Frontex

**December 2005** Meeting of the Council of the European Union in Hampton Court: the close involvement of third countries in the fight against irregular migration is agreed. The first Global Approach to Migration is agreed.

**2006** Euro-African Summit in Rabat' Rabat Action plan. Involvement of African States in the European fight against migration.

**2006** Plan África: Spain agrees on stronger political engagement in Africa concerning the fight against irregular migration.

in order to buy their co-operation.

### THE 'CONDITIONALISING' OF AID

The involvement of home- and transit nations in its control of migration gives Europe considerable leverage to exploit the dependency of these third countries on continuing co-operation in development work. This is done by making such co-operation conditional on the compliance of these 'co-operation partners' in matters of migration. Not only are repatriation agreements made an integral part of many treaties with third states; it is especially worrying to what extent collaboration in border control and combating unwanted migration is required as a prerequisite for co-operation in development. Thus development policy and co-operation are stripped of their very legitimacy and employed as bargaining chips in migration- and security policy. In addition, the practice of financing migration control directly through development funds is highly questionable, as it diminishes the services made available in these countries to combat ills such as poverty, and raises doubts concerning the standards and focus of development work.

### BLOCKING MIGRATION

The rigid system of surveillance exported by the EU means that migrants and refugees that are blocked in transit nations are deprived of almost any means of earning a living, often leading to despair and illness. Many migrants and refugees are stripped of their last resources and lead a miserable existence away from home. Due to a 'ratchet effect', migrants that have managed to get into Europe cannot return home, as that would most likely remove any possibility of ever getting back into the EU. This results – as seen most strikingly in Moldova – in families torn apart, and countless children and young people that are neglected as their parents work for their survival in Europe. The right to freedom of movement is replaced by biometric control. The interests of migrants and their needs and wishes for a better life are not respected but rejected far outside the European Union.

### NO PRIORITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The safeguarding of human rights takes a prominent place in Europe's conception of itself. However, in negotiations with third countries only lip service is paid to human rights, if they become part of the arrangements at all. And so, in the co-operation with regimes ranging in nature from authoritarian to dictatorial, such as Tunisia and Mauritania, a blind eye is turned to human rights violations in order to be able to push through measures combating migration. Dictatorships are recruited for border control and financed by Europe, and when the human rights of migrants and refugees are violated, these third countries are held responsible.

Civilian organisations that speak out for human rights and refugee protection in such countries are financed by the European Union only rarely and inadequately. A comparison between the sums that are made available by Europe for the security apparatus of border-, transit- and home nations and



the financial support given to organisations that work for human rights and the rights of refugees and fight against human trafficking lays bare Europe's priorities. Between 2005 and 2010, the EU and Spain financed projects for migration control to the tune of €20m; of that, a mere €160,000 went via the UNHCR to civilian organisations working in refugee protection.

## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM

Refugees are the first victims of European migration policy. The measures countering so-called irregular migration do not distinguish between migrants and refugees. People in need of protection are blocked in transit states like other migrants; there they can usually find only inadequate protection, if any. In many transit states there exist no regulations concerning asylum seekers or refugees, and the UNHCR has only weak representation, inadequate means and limited freedom of action in many of these countries.

The European Union's concept for refugees relies on 'regional programmes for protection'. The experience with refugees from Libya and Syria shows that refugees are not meant to leave the troubled region and that countries within the region, and not in Europe, are expected to look after these refugees. Only a small number of the migrants stranded as a result of the war in Libya were accepted by European states. It was mainly the US that responded, with generous admittance of refugees, to 'resettlement' – a programme supported by the UNHCR that seeks to resettle refugees in safe host countries. Europe, on the other hand, is funding the International Organisation for Migration and its implementation of programmes of repatriation in home countries. Lengthy conflicts lead to years of accommodation in camps without prospects. European participation in these resettlement programmes is too insignificant to help more than a mere fraction of refugees. Europe is bowing out of refugee protection more than ever before.

**2008** Pact on Migration and Asylum decides reinforced engagement in the signing of readmission agreements.

**2008** First mobility partnerships with Cape Verde Islands and Moldova

**2011** The European Commission publishes the second Global Approach: migration policy is closely linked to foreign and development policy.

**2002** The Spanish SIVE surveillance system commences in the Strait of Gibraltar and is successively expanded to the southern Spanish coasts.

**October 2005** “Ceuta and Melilla”: African migrants try to scale the fences of the two enclaves. Numerous people are shot, and hundreds are deported to the desert or to their countries of origin.

**2006** “Crise dos Cayucos”: More than 30,000 migrants reach the Canary Islands by boat. Many die during the attempted crossings or due to defence actions.

**2006** Frontex Operation Hera I + II in the Canary Islands

**2006** Start of Operation Seahorse: surveillance of the Atlantic coasts of West Africa, Spanish cooperation with Western African states.

## PROMOTION OF MARGINALISATION, STIGMATISATION AND RACIST UNDERCURRENTS

A core aspect of the social effects of the realignment of European migration policy is the export of a European notion that denigrates migration as ‘illegal’ or ‘irregular’, despite the fact that migration is completely legal in places such as Turkey or large parts of West Africa. Such irregularisation of migration fosters the criminalisation of migrants and refugees, which in turn fuels xenophobic and hostile attitudes towards migrants. Throughout the entire Maghreb region, Europe’s practice of commissioning the services of autocratic governments has led to a reinforcement of stereotypes of ‘black’ migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. In Mauritania, migrants are suspected of illegal acts on a wholesale basis: the accusation of irregular migration has led to assaults on and the marginalisation of immigrants and Mauritania’s ‘black’ population. This fuels tensions within Mauritania’s precarious social fabric and results in an exodus of migrants whose working power is subsequently missed.

## COUNTING, CONTROLLING AND BLOCKING

The central metaphor in discussing migrants and refugees is the ‘stream’. Using terms such as ‘influx’ or ‘mixed flows’, migrants are viewed as an amorphous advancing mass. For this reason the European instruments of migration control resemble defences designed to avert flood disasters. Money is lavished on the development of measuring instruments and early warning systems as well as the construction of dams on borders and retention basins in transit nations. This is not only approached in a material and technical way, but also through the targeted training of the authorities in home- and transit states and the passing of appropriate laws and action plans. Establishing terms such as ‘irregular flow of migration’ helps to lay down an ideological foundation and to create role models for the lock keepers at the European Union’s external borders.

A fixation on control and blockade prohibits a view of migrants that sees more in them than automatons controlled by money, reacting mechanically to push and pull stimuli. This one-sidedness blocks a clear view of the dynamics of migration and migratory networks. The closing of borders inhibits a circulation that would otherwise benefit migrants and their families as well as the home- and transit countries.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) place particular importance on the measuring and counting of migration. The migration profiles compiled by the IOM consistently bemoan a lack of data and resulting lack of reliability. ICMPD is a leading proponent of the visualisation of migration movements using the so-called i-map, a tool that in turn forms the basis for further projects. ICMPD and IOM chaperone and channel the implementation of European interests in the migration policies of transit nations: behind almost every Moldovan bureaucrat stands a European advisor. They advise, coordinate and bring together; the drafting and implementation of laws and regulations happens at the behest of and under the watchful eyes of the EU, and as a result there is little chance for the interests of third countries to develop.

## SHAMEFUL REJECTIONS

The repatriation agreements thus negotiated result in repatriations and rejections of migrants and refugees, often without any assessment of their need for protection and any consideration of the refugees' fate in the bordering states. Frontex co-ordinates push back operations in which refugees and migrants are indiscriminately driven back to the coasts of third countries. The ban by the European Court of Human Rights on such push back operations is ignored not only on Turkey's coast. In Senegal and Tunisia refugees were arrested following rejection; often they are deported further – in the worst cases back to the persecuting home nations. The European Union and its member states take little interest in following up the fates and the treatment of deportees in transit nations – in such cases compliance with human rights is no longer considered to be the business of the European Union. The UN Human Rights Council appears helpless in its admonitions to include clauses safeguarding human rights in repatriation agreements and in its warnings to refrain from entering into such arrangements while acceptable treatment of refugees and migrants and their human rights cannot be safeguarded.

**2010** First Rabit Operation by Frontex in Greece (Rapid Border Intervention Team)

**2013** The European surveillance system Eurosur officially starts.

## IMMOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS: SELF-INTEREST IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

Human rights and the rights of refugees also play only a minor role in the mobility partnerships that the EU has entered into with several nations.

The non-binding character of these partnerships is telling. Border- and migration control are a prerequisite to prospective visa facilitation. These simplifications, however, depend on the goodwill of the individual member states, which are at liberty to open migration routes according to their own particular interests. This has so far led mainly to small and very small projects in third countries, mainly designed to promote remigration. There are no offers for immigration, not even temporary ones, except for a few demand-led opportunities for seasonal workers and highly qualified individuals. This brain drain – and even the European Commission sees it as that – has markedly negative effects on the countries of origin, which pay for the expensive training of skilled workers that are subsequently not available domestically. The model of mobility partnerships turns out to be a front for projects that in the main aim at the immobilisation of migrants.

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# Demands

■ Europe can no longer accept that each year its migration policy leads to the deaths of thousands of people at its external borders. Refugee protection and the preservation of the human dignity of asylum seekers and migrants must be of paramount importance. Rather than expanding the defence mechanisms against migrants and refugees, it is the zones of protection and migrants' rights that must be expanded. Europe must no longer pass on to other nations the responsibility for refugees and migrants.

■ Only the existence of legal transit routes for those forced to flee can put an end to the vast number of deaths. Europe must open danger-free routes for migrants and refugees. The increasing reduction of possible entry routes leads to a lack of alternatives for refugees and those in need of protection. Instead of shifting refugee protection to transit spaces, the European Union and its member states must take mandatory responsibility for asylum seekers.

■ Europe urgently needs a functioning marine rescue system. Every effort must be made to save human lives. Rescued asylum seekers must be brought to a European port where a fair asylum procedure is possible. Frontex and Eurosur are charged with the prevention of so-called 'illegal immigration', but not with carrying out marine rescue operations or safeguarding asylum seekers' chances for a fair trial. Marine rescue by fishing vessels or other private mariners must be decriminalised.

■ Push backs (which are illegal under international law) and illegal deportation of refugees and asylum seekers – both practices are in contravention of fundamental refugee- and human rights – must cease immediately.

■ The right for freedom of movement must be strengthened, not undermined. The battle against migration insinuates a sense of threat in the population and fuels exclusion and racism within Europe and beyond. By transferring funds back to their home countries, migrants support the population and the economy of those nations, and they contribute in no small measure to our social security system and the increase of our prosperity. Nevertheless, migrants should not be considered mainly from an economic viewpoint, but as citizens with rights, interests, desires and needs.

■ European migration policy – with its current structure of mechanisms such as the mobility partnerships or the directive for highly qualified workers – is not sufficiently geared towards the well-being and needs of migrants. These programmes should be filled with content and opportunities that actually take account of migrants' interests. A comprehensive overhaul of these political mechanisms is essential. Refugees and migrants have to be included in the development of migration policies.

■ There has to be fundamental change in European asylum policy. The current Dublin regulation shifts responsibility for refugees to states at the periphery of the European Union that do not meet this responsibility. Refusal of marine rescue, illegal push back operations, arrests of asylum seekers, unfair asylum procedures and the depressing plight of refugees in many EU states demonstrate the fact that the current system has failed and violates human rights. European immigration regulations must be in solidarity with migrants and put the needs of asylum seekers at its core. European migration policies must satisfy the rights of migrants and fully consider the duties and realities both in the home- and transit nations and the EU itself.

■ Furthermore, the relocation of European migration defence to frequently economically weak regions where a complete lack of democratic control of state-operated bodies of repression and persecution is commonplace, increases the danger of mistreatment or arbitrary treatment of migrants and asylum seekers on the borders and in the transit nations. Europe must not further encourage the human rights violations occurring in such places through its own border policy. Civil Organisations working for human rights and migrants in transit- and home nations should be supported. Their role in scrutinising the repercussions of European migration policy must be strengthened.

■ Development aid must not be used as a means of payment for auxiliary services of an outsourced border control system, and must not be used as leverage to enforce co-operation in migration control. Instead, aspects of migration that encourage development must be supported, while the causes of enforced migration must be confronted. Furthermore, economic-, financial- and trade policies must be designed in such a way as to respect the protection of ecological and economic bases of existence and no longer readily accept the destruction of livelihoods. Those European Union's agriculture and fishing subsidies that distort trade and are environmentally harmful must be rolled back, while European trade barriers for southern nations must be removed and unfair debts cancelled.

■ All EU nations should ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which sets out the rights of all migrant, seasonal and occasional workers and their families, and thereby actively contribute to the protection of their rights.

■ A Europe that is truly committed to democracy and humanity must also be judged by the way it treats refugees and migrants. All migrants and refugees are citizens of the world, and therefore must be granted all the unalienable rights formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." That means everywhere – even within the European Union and at Europe's external borders.



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TURKEY:

## A land of hope or the end of the line for refugees?

**MIGRATION POLICY AS A TOOL OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCY. WHILE THE EUROPEAN UNION INSISTS ON CONTROLLING TRANSMIGRATION TO EUROPE, TURKEY EMPLOYS AN OPEN VISA POLICY TO FURTHER ITS OWN PLANS OF REGIONAL HEGEMONY.**



Harsh measures are taken against migrants and refugees trying to reach the Greek islands; systematic excesses of defence have cost the lives of many migrants and refugees. Boats full of refugees are forced to turn back to the Turkish coast, water and petrol are frequently confiscated and dinghies are perforated, so that the occupants can barely make it back to the Turkish shore. These operations, known as push backs, not only contravene refugee law and migrants' rights, but they frequently endanger human lives. However, since the Turkish authorities intensified the controls in the Aegean in 2010, the asylum seekers' routes have shifted towards the north-eastern border between Turkey and Greece: the Evros region. There, the river Evros constitutes the border for some 206 km; only along a stretch of 12.5 km the course of the border deviates from that of the river and can be crossed on foot. In 2010, at the request of the Greek government, Frontex employed a RABIT team at the Evros – a kind of rapid response unit of border guards. Greece dug a trench at the border to Turkey and secured the border with fences and electronic surveillance equipment. Today, the main route for refugees and migrants has shifted back to the Aegean, but the number of border crossings has stayed well below previous levels. Turkey is controlling its borders

The routes for fleeing and migrating into the EU have continuously shifted in conjunction with border controls at Europe's external border. While the routes via Morocco, Libya and the Ukraine were at times completely blocked over the course of the last years, the section of border between Turkey and Greece became the most important route for immigration into Europe. As a result, the Greek section of the European Union's external border has since 2006 become one of the key areas of operation for Frontex, the European border agency. During 2008 and 2009, the Aegean coast was the most important point of departure for refugees trying to reach the Greek islands from Turkey by boat. Frontex supports the Greek authorities and security forces in the fight against unwanted immigration.

with the European Union and as a result many fewer refugees and migrants manage to get through. How was it possible to gain Turkish support for this strategy? What are the consequences of this closing of European borders for refugees from Syria and other states? Is migration control a collateral used by the Turkish government to wrest other concessions – such as entry to the EU – from Europe?

## SHARING IN THE ECONOMIC BOOM

Like many other states that are in a transitional phase towards modernisation and economic upturn, Turkey is at once a nation of emigration, immigration and transit. In the European Union, Turkey is primarily seen as a nation of emigration, a perception connected to the immigration of foreign workers to Europe and the movement of refugees out of Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s. Currently about 2.5 million people of Turkish nationality live in the European Union, mainly in Germany. Yet Turkey has always also been a nation of immigration. While emigration from Turkey is at an historic post-war low – very low movement of refugees and mainly migration of highly skilled workers – the country accepts not only migrant workers, but also large numbers of refugees and displaced persons from Iran, Afghanistan and Syria.

Immigration into Turkey dates back to the era of the Ottoman Empire. During the 20th century there were significant migration movements mainly from the Balkans. Between 1923 and 1997, more than 1.6 million people immigrated to Turkey and settled on a long-term basis. From the late 1970s onwards, large numbers of refugees reached Turkey from Iran; today this group numbers around 100,000 people. In 1992, some 20,000 Bosnian and other refugees from the Balkans found refuge in Turkey, and in 1999 a further 18,000 refugees from Kosovo followed. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of entries into Turkey has tripled; today over 30 million people enter Turkey legally each year. As of 2013, Turkey is home to around 1.3 million registered foreign nationals. In addition, the number of undocumented immigrants is estimated to be between 500,000 and 1 million – a figure comparable to that in the nations of the European Union.

## TRANSIT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

Yet for a long time Turkey has also been an important transit nation for migrants and refugees on their way to Europe. During the past 15 years, around 800,000 undocumented migrants are said to have been apprehended in Turkey – 55,000 in 2010 alone. Many of them had entered Turkey legally. The European Union is concerned about these numbers. However, new reports also demonstrate that numerous groups of refugees and migrants who had initially planned to travel onwards to the EU changed their plans due to the economic crisis in the EU. Some of them – having entered Europe via Turkey but then stranded in Greece, where they were confronted with unemployment, homelessness, hunger and racist violence – even returned to Istanbul where they found better conditions. The booming Turkish economy absorbs many migrants who, while living in precarious conditions initially, can sometimes advance socially to at least a certain degree.

## REGIONAL POWER AND AMBITIONS FOR ENTRY INTO THE EU

Migration has always been an important issue in the relations between Turkey and the European Union. Liberal conditions for Turkish employees were negotiated at an early stage. Turkey has had pre-accession status for some 15 years, ever since a failed attempt for entry to the European Union in the 1980s. During that time, twelve other states that gained pre-accession status after Turkey have become members of the European Union. The citizens of all other pre-accession countries have in the meantime been granted entry to Europe without visas, but not Turkish nationals – a fact that is regarded as unfair or even insulting in Turkey. Ever more chapters are opened in the negotiations, but the accession process is dragging on. Within the EU there is much scepticism towards Turkey's accession, and Europe's dithering has led to a marked decline in interest for entry among the Turkish population. Nevertheless, the Turkish government has aligned its laws with European standards in many areas. There are, however, several contentious issues concerning the management of migration that are slowing down progress in the relations between the EU and Turkey.



↑ **“MANAGEMENT OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS“ ON THE DOORSTEP OF EUROPE:  
A REFUGEE CAMP IN THE YAYLADAGI DISTRICT IN THE REGION OF HATAY**

While a readmission agreement has been in place between Greece and Turkey since 2001, there are problems in its implementation and Greece is able to hand over to Turkey only a fraction of the apprehended refugees and migrants. This is a further reason why the EU is pressing for the signing of a EU readmission agreement with Turkey.

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Negotiations have been going on since 2003, and in 2013 a resolution (yet to be ratified by Turkey) was passed that includes the readmission of transit migrants. It is important for Turkey that in return the European Union introduces a clear liberalisation of its visa regulations for Turkish nationals. In the summer of 2012 the EU commissioner Cecilia Malmström made concessions and promised simplifications in the visa procedures. Now the implementation of this announced change is a strong incentive for Turkey to sign up to the readmission agreement. Human rights organisations are strongly criticising the wording of the agreement: not only would Turkey be burdened with the responsibility for all irregular migrants under this agreement, it

also lacks any mention of refugee protection.

Turkey has signed up to the Geneva Refugee Convention, but not the supplementary protocol that extends the duty for protection to all refugees of all states – a fact criticised by the EU. As a result, currently only refugees from Europe can access the right to asylum in Turkey; all others are only offered temporary and precarious protection there. Moreover it is very difficult to make any application for refugee protection in Turkey at all. This is compounded by the practice of assigning refugees to so-called satellite cities, where they find overcrowded refugee camps, long waiting times and unfavourable conditions for finding work or accommodation. These are good reasons for refugees not to settle in Turkey, but to continue trying to find routes into the EU.

The European Union sees Turkey’s visa policy as the third significant point of criticism of Turkey’s migration policies. Many nationals from countries on the EU’s visa ‘blacklist’ do not require a visa for

entry into Turkey or can easily obtain one at the border. After making a number of small concession when pressed by the EU and introducing compulsory visas for a number of nations, Turkey made a U-turn in 2005 and lifted the need for visas for some states, among them Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Russia and Serbia. This can be seen as an indication of Turkey's interests to strengthen relations with its neighbouring countries and to strengthen its role as a regional power. It would seem that Turkey is not seeking entry to the European Union at any price.

## EUROPEAN BORDER MANAGEMENT

Despite growing scepticism towards the EU within Turkey, the government there has made strenuous efforts to accede to European interests in several areas. This applies especially in its migration policy, where surprisingly liberal migration laws were passed. At the same time Turkish efforts have concentrated on border control and the fight against irregular migrants and refugees. Over the past few years, Turkey has introduced numerous new organisational structures in this area, expanded border security and taken steps to transfer border control from a military to a civilian framework. Currently, however, a number of different authorities and security forces are still involved in border control, which confuses competences and specifically complicates access to protection for migrants and refugees.

Turkey received substantial European backing in this reorganisation process. In support of Turkish alignment of its migration and asylum policies with European requirements, eight 'twinning projects' were carried out between 2003 and 2004 alone: strengthening institutions in their fight against human trafficking, visa policies and practices, asylum, border control, criminal prosecution and questions of migration. Since 2010, at least two twinning projects have been implemented in the areas of asylum and migration. One of these projects was for 'support to Turkey's capacity in combating illegal migration and establishment of removal centres for illegal migrants'; several detention centres have been built or extended both at Turkey's western and eastern border. The second project plans to introduce a system for accommodation of asylum

seekers and refugees. Each twinning project involves one or more European nations. Apart from material support, these twinning projects also facilitate exchange between authorities and the implementation of European standards. The EU and participating member states are investing several hundred million euros through these projects. Frontex, too, is cooperating with the Turkish security forces in various areas such as risk analysis and training.

## A BUFFER FOR THE EU?

The geographic particularities of the Turkish coastline (its length, mountainous regions and convoluted sea borders), border regions with impoverished living conditions that encourage smuggling, an authoritarian rhetoric regarding border control even as Turkey's economy is booming, and international relations characterised by an 'open-door' approach are all leading to a considerable political dilemma.

On the one hand, Turkey is keeping its doors open for Syrian refugees – a practice no EU member state is likely to consider. Moreover, Turkey has passed a new migration law that – on paper – is in a much more humanitarian spirit than any EU migration law. On the other hand, Turkey's borders are rigidly controlled, irregular migrants are arrested and sometimes deported. In addition, using EU funds, seven new refugee camps and three deportation camps were opened and training for police (including border police) was improved.

The transit route via the eastern Mediterranean that leads through Turkey lost much of its relevance in 2012. This was accompanied by stricter border controls in Greece as well as measures within Turkey. At the same time the numbers of people entering Turkey as travellers, migrants and refugees from Syria and other countries peaked. Several hundred thousand refugees, mainly from Syria, currently live in Turkey. While the economy offers some career prospects for many migrants and refugees, authoritarian officials and security forces are responsible for a treatment of refugees that frequently violates their rights and ignores their need for protection.



## TURKEY

In recent years, **Turkey** has developed into a largely urbanised and industrially developed country with a strong middle class.

**Population:** The population of Turkey in 2012 was approximately 75.63 million.

**Emigration:** The estimated number of emigrated people in 2010 was 4.2 million.

**Immigration:** According to an estimate by UNDP, in 2010 around 1.8 million foreign citizens were living in Turkey.

**Remittances:** In 2012, 940m US dollars were transferred into Turkey, of which 607m came from Germany.

**GDP 2012:** 817.3bn US Dollar.

**Human Development Index 2012:** 90th place

**Government:** The President of Turkey is Abdullah Gul. Since 2003, the Prime Minister is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Conservative-Islamic Justice and Development Party - AKP).

**PRO ASYL** supports the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA) in Istanbul. HCA offers free legal aid and takes a political stand on issues around refugee policy in Turkey. Another partner organisation is Mülteci-Der in Izmir. Founded in 2008, this organisation represents the humanitarian, social and legal interests of refugees, particularly in Izmir and the Turkish Aegean region.

While Turkey carries a lot of responsibility in this, the EU's contribution to humane solutions for Syrian refugees is extremely limited. In its approach to migration policies directed at Turkey the EU concentrates on projects for detention and deportation of migrants in Turkey and stricter surveillance of Turkish borders. Measures aimed at sharing responsibility for the Syrian refugee crisis, among others – such as the simplification of resettlement or improvement of conditions for refugees within Turkey – are almost non-existent. European-Turkish migration policy passes responsibility for migration- and refugee policy to Turkey.

While Turkey is by no means completely subordinate to the European Unions migration policy, it nevertheless accommodates European interests. Its conflict of interests between rapprochement with the European Union and strengthening of Turkey as a regional power leads to Turkish policies that inhibit transit migration but favour immigration and offer only conditional refugee protection.



THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA:

## Fleeing the poorhouse

**EUROPEAN POLICIES THAT ARE BASED LARGELY ON MIGRATION MANAGEMENT NOT ONLY NEGLECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THOSE AFFECTED BUT ALSO FOSTER THE DISINTEGRATION OF A WHOLE SOCIETY.**



Patrascu Gheorghe, mayor of Radoaia, a small town of 6,000 inhabitants, receives us in his town hall, a dilapidated old villa. It is cold: there won't be any gas for the heating system for a few days yet; the energy supply is managed centrally. The room is bare, and there are no computers. The mayor sits behind his desk clad in a heavy leather jacket. He is left to govern the shortages and the people who are still left here. There are many households in town that are not connected to the water or electricity mains, where there are no sewers and where there is no refuse collection. The roads are in a bad state; because of all the potholes we had to drive at walking pace for the last few kilometres of the motorway. The place is deserted: more than two thirds of the inhabitants are abroad, in Russia, the Ukraine or in the West. Only the old and children remain. Sophia Wirsching, working for the agency Brot für die Welt, and Roman Citac from Chisinau, member of the NGO Beginning of Life, are in Moldova to investigate the effects of migration and European migration policy.

Gheorghe says that the demise of the Soviet Union led to an utter collapse of the Moldovan economy. The few industrial plants that existed closed down, and only an acrid smoke emanating from industrial wasteland abandoned at the beginning of the 1990s still wafts over entire swathes of land. The state farms were cut up into small parcels of land to provide for individuals' needs, but hardly anyone can live off these patches of land. Due to high energy costs they are very expensive to farm; many people almost invest more in the land than they are able to extract. The farmers lack knowledge of a market economy, there is insufficient infrastructure, and most people were not able to successfully make the transition from a state- to a market economy. Imports from neighbouring countries are often cheaper than local produce.

It is almost impossible to make a living in rural areas, and so people moved away, to the city or even abroad. There was a first significant wave of emigration towards Russia as early as the 1990s. Other destinations followed: the Ukraine and the neighbouring Balkan nations, Italy, Spain, France and also Germany.

## THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Population:** around 3.6 million in 2013

**Emigration:** In 2013, according to estimates by the International Organization for Migration, around 600,000 Moldovan citizens were living abroad. Main countries of destination are Russia, Ukraine and the European Union (mainly Italy).

**Immigration:** Moldova is to a minor degree also a destination country for migrants from the neighbouring states, mainly from Ukraine.

**Remittances:** According to the World Bank, Moldovan migrants sent around 1.77bn US dollars to Moldova in 2012, which constitutes around one quarter of the GDP.

**GDP 2012:** With a GDP of around 7.5bn US dollars, Moldova is the poorest country in Europe. The mainly agrarian products (wine, vegetables, fruits, tobacco) and its energy supply situation lead to a strong dependency mainly on Russian politics.

**Human Development Index 2012:** 0.66 (113th place).

**Government:** President is Nicolae Timofti (Independent), Head of Government is Iurie Leanca (PLDM - Partidul Liberal Democrat din Moldova)

Not only the collapse of the economy, but also migration have left their marks. Young people and children increasingly develop alcohol dependency; thefts and riots are on the increase. The old and the sick are no longer able to provide for themselves. The mayor is unable to alleviate the hardship of his people. There are six social workers in the community, all hopelessly overloaded with work. An Austrian relief organisation provides a daily soup kitchen for old people who do not receive support from family members. Mayor Gheorghe looks like a man who wouldn't mind knuckling down, but faced with this situation he only shrugs his shoulders helplessly.

Almost every family has at least one family member abroad. How much money they send home, if any, depends on the strength of the social ties and the wages abroad. Many mothers have no money for their children because their husbands do not send anything from abroad. Many children live with their grandparents, or end up on the streets or in children's homes. According to the mayor, there were hardly any social differences among the inhabitants during the Soviet regime, but with migration and the money transfers coming in from abroad soon came marked differences and social strata. While some people drifted off into deep poverty, there were those who could make investments helped by support from abroad. Money transfers are usually handled directly by family members or via a courier- and driver system. Despite the fact that most transfers do not go through banks, these transfers still amount to roughly a quarter of the entire economic output of the country and are the prime source of foreign currency. The state increased VAT (value added tax) so as to be able to benefit from this flow of money. However, none of this revenue ends up in the depleted municipal coffers. The cost of clothing, food and building materials are on a par with Europe, but local wages remain far too low. The mayor's monthly pay is equivalent to about €200; even he relies on the money from his sons abroad. Both work on European building sites, in Portugal and France.

The situation in Radoaia is representative for the whole of Moldova. The small country – roughly the size of Belgium – has not benefited economically from the fall of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, it is split into two halves: a Western part, leaning towards Romania, and a small Eastern strip, Transnistria, whose population mostly aligns itself with Russia. Transnistria's declaration of independence in 1990 led to an armed conflict; Moldova is only prepared to grant the region an autonomous status. The end of the East-West conflict led to the collapse of the old economic and political structures, and the population voted with its feet and began to leave. While the situation in the country makes little progress, in the meantime the population has split into those who stayed, and those who live and work abroad.



↑ LEFT BEHIND BY THEIR PARENTS: MAINLY CHILDREN AND OLD PEOPLE POPULATE THE PROVINCIAL TOWN OF RADOAIA

## SELL-OUT OF A SOCIETY

Moldova is poor; it ranks 111th on the Human Development Index 2011. Almost a third of the population, estimated to be 3.8 million, lives on less than \$2 per day, and roughly half of the population lives below the poverty line. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, Moldova's economy has shrunk by 60 per cent. At least a third of the working population is employed in the agricultural sector; the average monthly wage is €150. However, this figure only includes those who actually are in paid work. Particularly in rural areas many subsist by growing vegetables and carrying out odd jobs. Many children outside the towns do not go to school; the closest school is far away and their parents cannot raise the money for transport and school materials.

Poverty and lack of security leave their marks on Moldova. Both the high emigration rate and the low birth rate – which is among the lowest in Europe – speak of the widespread hopelessness. With a higher death- than birth rate, Moldova's population is diminishing, even without taking emigration into account. Society is disintegrating: the process of corrosion can be felt even in primary family ties. Spouses leave each other, the number of marriages is declining, children leave their parents

and parents fail their children. About 38,000 girls and boys are recorded as 'social orphans' in the Republic of Moldova – one or other of their parents works abroad and they end up in a home. Sometimes children are sold abroad. Girls recruit their girlfriends as prostitutes using dubious pretexts. According to the International Organisation for Migration, forced prostitution only accounts for perhaps one percent of the total migration; it is, however, a grim reality. Abroad – in Russia, the West, in Turkey and Dubai – women are forced to prostitute themselves, before being paid off and sent back. The intervals have become shorter: now women are often sent back after half a year; in the past it was one or two years. After their return, women are unable to report what they were doing and what was done to them – their families and friends would abandon them. Thus, countries abroad are at once full of promise and terror. To a smaller extent, men and children are also victims of human trafficking and forced labour.

The idealisation of countries abroad is a consequence of a society's lack of belief in its own ability to develop. Even 20 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Moldova is poor, underdeveloped and without perspective. The country is in desperate need

of investment, but bureaucracy and corruption paralyse and deter business.

In principle, migrants do not want to leave their country and their families, but they are forced into migration by lack of employment opportunities and low wages. In rural areas a family traditionally expects to own a house and to pay for a good education for the children. It is therefore a widespread belief in the rural community that young people would stay, if only there was properly paid work in the country. Where this is not the case, the parents leave, and when they return home, the children leave. More and more often, however, the parents do not return. They get their children to join them abroad, and Moldova turns into a mere memory.

## ROUTES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Migration from Moldova exists in several phases and forms, depending on the possibilities abroad and those in Moldova. The regulations in the destination countries are often the decisive factor. Russia and the Ukraine are attractive, as no visa is required for up to three months and travel costs are relatively low. This leaves open the possibility to briefly return to Moldova after three months, and then to start out again. In Russia, after all, wages are 2.5 times higher than in Moldova.

The situation is different for journeys to countries of the European Union. Wages are often higher there, and emigration is usually based on longer time periods. High travelling costs, especially in the case of irregular migration, and the risk of being apprehended at borders are reasons against entering and exiting repeatedly. Often migrants only dare to travel once a genuine job or work opportunity has been promised in advance. The majority of the economic migrants from Moldova working legally in the EU are women. In Italy, roughly 70 per cent of the 200,000 Moldovan migrants are female. Only in a few member states men are in the majority – mainly in Poland and Portugal. Moldovan women often work in domestic or care settings, while men are employed in construction and agriculture. Only a small percentage is in highly qualified employment. Overall, Moldovan migrants are young, between 20 and 49 years of age. The percentage of migrants with higher educa-

tion was at least 10 per cent in 2010 and there is an upward trend. However, even they work mainly on building sites or in care professions. Migration is 'brain waste', skills are being squandered. There are no figures concerning Moldovans living and working in the EU irregularly.

Many of those living abroad would like to return home but are victims of the so-called 'ratchet effect': after leaving the EU it is very difficult to get back in, and thus very few return home. The effects of irregularity prevent circular migration, and the potential of the diaspora cannot be used positively for Moldova.

## BORDER CONTROL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF EU POLICY

The measures implemented by the EU through its various mechanisms in Moldova – the Eastern Partnership, the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Mobility Partnership – can straightforwardly be summed up like this: the aim of the EU's policy in Moldova is to secure the border. Unlike the Ukraine, for example, Moldova (without Transnistria) has clearly oriented itself towards the European Union. Border control and security are among Europe's key requirements for closer ties with Moldova. Thus Moldova has ratified numerous international agreements, is represented in all regional forums on migration, and tries its level best to meet the EU's demands. An enlarged free trade area, competent government and an improvement in the underlying economic conditions are all important areas in the co-operation between the EU and the Republic of Moldova. However, key aspects of the agreements between the EU and Moldova are readmission agreements guaranteeing deportations to Moldova, the introduction of biometric passports for identification of Moldovan nationals, controls at external borders by customs officials and border police, and the fight against illegal migration, people smugglers and human trafficking. Thus, in 2010, Moldova was represented in 9 out of 11 regional programmes on migration funded by the EU. Since 2005, EUBAM (the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine) has been supporting the local authorities in improving border controls with 100 international and over 100 local personnel. This is in addition to Frontex missions and activities by the International



Organisation for Migration (IOM), who, on behalf of European nations, cares for victims of human trafficking and returnees. The IOM is also involved in the co-ordination of the many Moldovan authorities and administrative bodies that deal with migration, and has recently compiled an extended migration profile in which data and developments relevant to migration are collected. A mobility partnership between the European Union and Moldova is intended to create opportunities and improve conditions for migration. So far, however, the reality appears to be that it is mainly Moldova that is required to fulfil the EU's demands. Whether legal migration routes into the EU will be opened later on is not contractually agreed, but is dependent on the willingness and interests of EU member states. In the face of the economic crisis that level of interest is currently very low.

## THE COST OF MOBILITY

In migration – even in the irregular variety – there are winners and losers. Higher hurdles for migration lead to higher costs for migrants and increased levels of vulnerability, oppression and exploitation abroad. Europe's market economy benefits from the availability of a cheap or ultra-cheap workforce in areas such as care for the elderly, prostitution, construction and agriculture. The underdeveloped Republic of Moldova benefits from an inward flow of foreign currency and investments by migrants. The migrants have to pick up the bill. Many run into debt trying to travel to countries of the European Union, many fail to lead a life in dignity or to find properly paid work. Many relationships and families come to ruin as a result. But there are always a few who do manage to arrange an income for their relatives, to find an apprenticeship place and to show off coveted status symbols, and thus fuel the impression that migration does pay.

European policy towards Moldova mainly aims at the installation of policies of control. The EU spends large sums of money on devising and implementing laws and regulations for migration management. The protection of migrants' human rights is neglected. Attempts to make migration safer and more beneficial – both for the country as a whole and individual migrants – are few and far between, not sufficiently financed, and lack real commitment. So far, the mobility partnership turns out to be an

immobility partnership. While Moldova complies with European demands for border control and re-admission of its nationals, there are hardly any advantages or opportunities worth mentioning for migrants. They are left to their own devices both by the European Union and their own country. Irregular migration is made to be very costly indeed while regular migration is not on offer at all. As there are no objectives in migration policy that take into account migrants' interests and needs and address the dynamics of migration instead of blocking it, the number of reasons to leave Moldova is unlikely to decrease in the foreseeable future.

**Brot für die Welt** supports in Moldova the association Moldavian Christian Aid (MCA) working on the improvement of living conditions of elderly people and people in need of care in rural areas.



TUNISIA:

## The Mediterranean Sea as a frontier of prosperity

EUROPE'S SECURITY POLICY AT ITS EXTERNAL BORDERS, BEING ENTIRELY FIXATED ON AUTHORITARIAN STABILITY AND EFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT OF THIRD COUNTRIES IN MIGRATION CONTROL, NOT ONLY RISKS THE LIVES OF REFUGEES BUT ALSO INHIBITS DEMOCRATIC AWAKENINGS.



We are meeting with members of an association of relatives of missing migrants in a café in central Tunis. They are mainly mothers who have not heard anything from their children. We have come here with representatives of Le Venticinque Undici – an Italian women's collective that supported the Tunisian relatives association in obtaining information on missing migrants from the Italian authorities. Their efforts had come to nothing. Now the Italian women want to plan further steps. The relatives, about 20 of them, mainly women, are agitated. They put forward new or already known details about the boat crossings and new evidence on the possible fate of their sons. The women are very upset; their reports are desperate. Some are crying. The discussion is getting more and more tense. After about two hours the meeting comes to a somewhat chaotic end, and, after arranging to meet for an initial demonstration the next day, we leave.

Meetings like this have become commonplace in the last few years. European activists are no longer prepared to tolerate the European isolationist policy; networks such as Boats4People and Watch The Med intend to join forces with the newly emerging social movements in Tunisia. Migration is a key issue.

The mothers' desperation brings back memories of the mothers of individuals who disappeared during the Latin-American terror regimes. In this case, however, is not the work of the secret police, but it is the trans-border fight against so-called 'irregular' migration that leads to the disappearances. Europe has long co-operated with Tunisia in combating migration from and through Tunisia. Judith Kopp of PRO ASYL gained an insight into the situation on the ground through encounters with various members of the civilian population in Tunisia and representatives of the European border organisations in the country.

## DIRTY DEALS AGAINST DEMOCRACY

The European Union – and especially Italy, as the closest member state – have over the past 20 years collaborated closely with the repressive regime of Ben Ali. In 1998 the EU signed a treaty of association with Tunisia, in the context of which mainly economic co-operation took place. Tunisia was involved in the Barcelona Process, which promoted collaboration between Mediterranean countries. Participation in combating irregular migration into Europe was a condition for economic co-operation from early on. Since 2004 Tunisia has been integrated in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In the action plan for Tunisia 2005 to 2010, negotiations on a readmission agreement with the EU were codified, and the training and reinforcement of border police at land- and sea borders and the provision of police materials were agreed upon. The EU was fully aware of the fact that Tunisia's asylum and refugee protection policies were completely devoid of legal mechanisms safeguarding protection, and that the dialogue with the UNHCR was on hold. Despite that, in a strategic paper the EU praised Tunisia's efforts to curb irregular migration through restrictive laws and rigid border controls, as well as Ben Ali's favourable co-operation with Italy and France in combating migration.

It was the concern especially of Italy to integrate Tunisia into migration defence. As early as 1998, the two nations signed a treaty on readmission not only for Tunisian nationals, but also for migrants and refugees that had entered Europe via Tunisia. Between 1998 and 2003, joint patrols along the Tunisian coast led to the arrest of more than 37,000 persons by the Tunisian authorities; roughly half of them were Tunisian nationals. The Italian police trained the Tunisian border police and undertook to furnish the Tunisian border police with police equipment worth €20.7m.

The prospect of legal opportunities for immigration was also used as an incentive by Italy to induce Tunisia to sign readmission treaties: in 1990, a quota of visas for 1,500 Tunisian migrants annually was introduced in Italy. In the very same year Tunisia signed the first readmission agreement with Italy. In 2000, the quota was raised to 3,000

visas. However, it was only in the first two years that about 3,000 Tunisians were actually allowed to travel to Italy legally; after that, the real number of visas issued fell drastically. What remains of the deals are the components combating irregular migration. In 2003, a new readmission- and policy co-operation agreement was signed, which includes the financing of technical equipment worth €7m per year. Bilateral co-operation of Italian and Tunisian border guards manifested itself in several operations turning back migrants in international waters. A violation of the non-refoulement principle cannot be ruled out. Under Ben Ali, Tunisia's sea border was the most secure in the entire Maghreb region.

However, visa quotas, co-operation with the border police and provision of police equipment were not the only measures taken by Italy to ensure Ben Ali's assistance in combating migration. While the negotiations for the readmission agreement were still going on in 1998, Italy already announced a new programme of development aid, under which €80m were made available to Tunisia for the years 1999 to 2001. Shortly after, a further €61m was approved. Just in time for the second readmission agreement in 2003, development aid worth €182m was agreed upon for the years 2005 to 2007.

At the same time Tunisia joined the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which since then has been carrying out projects in Tunisia, mostly co-financed by the Italian government. Hence Italy not only used development aid as an incentive for co-operation in matters of migration, it also deployed part of its development aid directly in the area of border control and migration management. The principle of 'conditionalised' development aid was even codified in Italian law in July 2002 (Legislative Decree 198/2002). According to this law, when enacting new development programmes, the Italian government is required to test the 'willingness to co-operate in combating illegal migration and people smuggling organisations'. Ben Ali's authoritarian treatment both of his own citizens and migrants deterred neither Europe nor Italy from doing business with Tunisia.

Since then, the situation in Tunisia has changed. When 26-year-old Mohamed Bou'azizi set himself on fire on December 17, 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, a small town in the poor central region of Tunisia, protests spread rapidly through the country. The uprising reached Tunis at the beginning of January 2011. Images of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators on the Avenue Habib Bourgiba and the violent repression of the protests by police were broadcast around the globe. On December 14, 2011, after ruling for 23 years, the dictator Zine El-Abadine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia. According to the United Nations, the upheaval in Tunisia cost 215 lives.

However, when Ben Ali fled the country, the revolutionary process in Tunisia had not run its course. The weeks that followed saw protests, multiple changes of government and a lingering frustration, especially among the younger generation. On October 23, 2011 the first free elections in the history of Tunisia were held, but the political situation in the country remained unstable. Before the end of 2011, the protests had spilled over into Libya and Egypt. A seemingly insignificant event had ignited protests that toppled old Mediterranean autocracies. Europe welcomed the fall of the old dictators and supported the rebels in Libya; however, these regime changes did in no way alter the course of European migration policy.

## FEAR OF A FREE MAGHREB

Europe's migration policy towards Tunisia is exemplary for a Realpolitik led by self-interest, making little difference between old dictatorships and young democracies. In the light of the actual practical reality, the following statement made by Stefan Füle, EU commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, at the end of February 2011, is of characteristic ambivalence:

"The crowds in the streets of Tunis, Cairo and elsewhere have been fighting in the name of our shared values. It is with them, and for them, that we must work today – not with dictators who are, as we speak, spilling the blood of their own people with utter disregard for human life."

But the arrival, at roughly the same time, of a few thousand young Tunisians in Southern Italy

unleashed a frantic European crisis: Italy talked of a national state of emergency and issued some of the migrants with transit visas, in order to make them leave the country as soon as possible. At the border, an indignant France began to turn those Tunisians back to Italy, while Denmark demanded the suspension of the Schengen agreement and the re-introduction of intra-European border controls when a handful of migrants arrived at its borders. At the same time the European border security agency Frontex was mobilised, and in an ad hoc action was ordered to intercept Tunisian boats and turn them back to Tunisia. The commission wanted to increase the funds available to Frontex by €30m, and, as early as April 2011, Frontex announced plans to carry out joint patrols against irregular migrants with the Tunisian border agency.

In 2011, the central Mediterranean Sea was among the most tightly controlled regions in the whole world. Not only was Frontex patrolling the Maghreb coasts, there were also NATO ships off the Libyan coast. Despite that presence, more than 2,000 refugees lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea during 2011. In a report of April 2012, the Council of Europe acknowledged the European nations' joint responsibility for the huge number of deaths at sea, and talked of a 'collective failure' of NATO, the UN and individual European member states.

Obviously the notion of joint values does not extend to solidarity with refugees and migrants. By travelling to Europe, they wanted to secure a livelihood for themselves and their families after the turmoil of the revolution. The economy was faltering, investors and tourists were staying away, and for many it did not look like they would be able to make a living in Tunisia alone. Initially, border controls slackened, too – the organisation of the security forces had got confused. Refugees and migrants used this opportunity to board boats; as in the case of the falling of the Berlin Wall, the recent liberation from the oppression of the regime was understood by many as freedom of movement. As a result, Europe scrambled to re-integrate the new Tunisian government into migration control. The prospect of a 'mobility partnership' was held out to Tunisia on the condition that European demands regarding the combating of irregular migration were fulfilled. Through these mobility partnerships,



↑ A PROTEST BY MOTHERS AND RELATIVES OF MISSING BOAT PEOPLE DURING THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM IN TUNIS

employees can selectively be brought into the European labour market as required. This, however, is conditional on a European member state issuing an appropriate permit.

Hopes that the new Tunisian government would be less willing to do deals on migration control than the old regime were soon dashed by reality. Tunisia's economy is highly dependent on Europe. 80 per cent of Tunisian exports go to Europe, and the majority of foreign investment in Tunisia comes from France or Italy. Migrants' contribution to the economy is also considerable: in late 2011, about

1.2 million Tunisians – equivalent to 11 per cent of the population – lived abroad. The registered transfers of funds into the country from Tunisians abroad amounted to roughly 5 per cent of the gross domestic product. In 2009, those transfers came to 2.653bn Tunisian dinars, which was then about €1.4bn. It is estimated that roughly the same amount flows into the country along other channels. It is therefore in the interest of the Tunisian government to facilitate migration and to strengthen contact with the Tunisian diaspora. But Europe held out the prospect of funding, business contracts and a relaxation of its visa policy, and so the migration



window was closed after but a few months, the Tunisian border forces carried out their duties again, and Tunisia accepted that many migrants who had just landed in Lampedusa were flown straight back to Tunisia.

But not everyone reaches Europe or returns home. Several thousand people have drowned or died in other ways between Tunisia and Italy, many are unaccounted for.

The relatives of some 300 missing migrants have joined forces in order to demand explanations from the Tunisian and Italian authorities. They are among the groups in Tunisia who vehemently campaign for information on the fates of the missing migrants. Since the spring of 2011 they have been making their cause public with protests that even included hunger strikes, and so shifted the stories of fates

of individuals from the private to the public sphere. They are supported by the Tunisian Forum for Social and Economic Rights (FTDES), an organisation that campaigns strongly in the area of migration and for the rights of migrants. Other groups that monitor migration include the Tunisian Centre for Migration and Asylum (CeTuMa), which works academically and politically for the rights of migrants and refugees, and the activists of the group Article 13, whose prime concern is freedom of movement. Even though other urgent matters might take centre stage in public debate, a critical discussion of migration policy and its consequences is never off the agenda. This not only applies to the situation of Tunisian migrants, but also that of sub-Saharan refugees who work in the Maghreb region or also seek their fortune in Europe.

## A REFUGEE TRAGEDY OVERSHADOWED BY LIBYA

The developments in little Tunisia soon were overshadowed by civil war flaring up in Libya. While Europe closed its borders in 2011, Libya's neighbouring countries took in hundreds of thousands of refugees in the wake of the Libyan civil war. Tunisia alone took in some 800,000 people seeking protection. Most refugees were of Libyan nationality, but about 200,000 of them were migrant workers who had lived in Libya. The city of Ben Guerdane, on the border with Libya, became a focal point for the admission of refugees. At the end of February 2011, four large camps were installed along the Tunisian-Libyan border under the direction of the UN. The majority of refugees found accommodation in camp Choucha shortly after the war broke out. Of the nearly 20,000 refugees who were in that camp initially, about 4,000 were left there after the IOM had repatriated many to countries such as Mali, Cameroon or the Gambia. Many of the remaining refugees had to endure up to two years in the inhospitable camp in the Tunisian desert.

Most of them were recognised by the UNHCR as refugees. About 2,000 were accepted by safe states – especially the USA – as part of a so-called resettlement programme. European countries dithered with admission regulations. Only after protests by the refugees in Choucha and demonstrations of solidarity in Tunisia and Germany it was possible in 2012 to secure admission of 201 people from the camp to Germany. About 400 people recognised

### TUNISIA

**Tunisia** is a country located in the south of the Mediterranean. It is 164,000 square kilometres in area, and borders Algeria in the west and Libya in the east. The country is characterized by a large social and economic gap between the coastal and inland regions.

**Population:** The population of Tunisia in 2013 was estimated to be around 10.84 million.

**Emigration:** In 2008, a total of 1,058,700 Tunisians (10.2% of the population) were registered with Tunisian consulates abroad. Immigration: According to the UNDP, in 2013 around 36,500 foreign citizens were living in Tunisia.

**Remittances:** During 2012, 2.198bn US-dollars were transferred into the country, of which 412m US dollars were sent from Italy and more than 1bn US dollars from France. Migrants in Tunisia transferred around 67m US dollars to their home countries.

GDP 2012: 46.146bn US dollars.

**Human Development Index 2012:** 0.712 (94th place).

**Government:** The long-lasting dictator Zine EL-Abidine Ben Ali was forced out the country on January 14, 2011. The current president is Moncef Marzouki (CPR – Congrès pour la République), and the prime minister of the country is Mehdi Jomaâ.



as refugees by the UNHCR were denied access to the resettlement programme on formal grounds. They had not reached the refugee camp in time and were to remain in Tunisia as part of a local integration programme. The refugees experienced hostilities and had to remain in a country that still has no laws guaranteeing protection for refugees.

Europe stands aside and counts on 'regional programmes for protection' to look after refugees on the edge of the conflict areas. This recalls the thought experiments by Otto Schily and Tony Blair in 2004, who wanted to transfer refugee protection to North Africa. With hindsight, the actions of Italy and the European Union in Tunisia would suggest that this is slowly becoming reality. The UNHCR has in the meantime closed the refugee camp Choucha. Food rations are no longer distributed; water storage tanks and toilet blocks have been demolished. But even while water is running out, a few hundred refugees hold out there. Choucha is a symbol of the failure of refugee protection outside Europe.

## EUROPE FENCES ITSELF IN

In Tunisia, not only did Europe miss an early chance to take the side of the people in the street over that of the dictator; it also put combating migration before refugee protection and returned migrants from Tunisia as quickly as possible to their country, thereby squandering the opportunity to show solidarity with a fledgling government and a straitened population. Instead of reaching out to Tunisia, withdrawal reflexes were allowed to dominate. Tunisia is expected to implement robust border security, and in return only vague prospects of an eased mobility are held out. Italy has shown in the past that such promises are not held. Tunisia's dependency on Europe makes it possible for the European Union to blatantly show its hegemonial face.

**PRO ASYL** and **medico international** support the project Watch The Med, which monitors deaths of boat refugees and human rights violations in the Mediterranean in an attempt to put an end to the impunity at Europe's sea borders. Today the project encompasses a wide network of organisations and activists.

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MAURITANIA:

## Europe's first external border

ON A BEACH IN AFRICA IT BECOMES CLEAR HOW A CONTROL POLICY IMPOSED BY EUROPE NOT ONLY DESTROYS THE DREAMS OF COUNTLESS PEOPLE, BUT ALSO PERMANENTLY TRANSFORMS OPEN RECEPTION SPACES INTO ZONES OF BANISHMENT.



as early as 2006. Spanish intercept vessels and helicopters patrolled the seas between the Canary Islands and Nouadhibou. All those who had tried to reach the Canaries ‘illegally’ from Mauritanian soil – even when the illegality was only an allegation – were successfully deported back to that country. Nowadays, no more boats set off from Nouadhibou. On behalf of medico international, Stephan Dünwald visited the city that for so many has become a dead end.

Kebba laughs, “We in Africa pray that Europe may explode! It’s Europe that causes all the problems for Africans.” We are sitting in a small, dingy room in a back yard in the old town of Nouadhibou. In the past, the tents of the Moors would have been in these back yards. With growing immigration to Nouadhibou, the owners built up the yards, rented the rooms to migrants for inflated prices, and built themselves grand estates outside the centre. Today, Nouadhibou’s centre is inhabited mainly by migrants; they work in the fishing industry, for the mining company or in construction. “Many wanted to go

The Mauritanian port town of Nouadhibou, located between sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb region, for a short time was seen as a favourable point of departure for all those African boat people who were seeking refuge by fleeing to Europe. After Morocco closed its own borders and those of occupied Western Sahara in 2005 in response to Spanish and EU pressure, emigration shifted further south. Every night, migrants took off from Nouadhibou in pirogues bound for the Canary Islands, often controlled by inexperienced skippers and inadequately equipped. Spain and the European border security agency Frontex tried to put a stop to these journeys

to Europe. Many still want to,” says Kebba and looks at me provokingly. Kebba has been in Nouadhibou since 1992, when he was 18 or 19 – and just passing through. Four times he has unsuccessfully tried to reach Europe. In the beginning he hid in the cargo areas of ships; from 2000 onwards people tried to reach the Canaries in fishing boats. “We’re not afraid of the sea. We know that it is dangerous.” But, he says, there hasn’t been anyone for a long time who has managed to get through the controls. While Europe might still have appeal for many, it is a dream that has now receded into the far distance. In the past, without the European Union, says Kebba, things had been easier. “But that is over. No-one leaves Nouadhibou now.”

## MIGRANTS UNDER GENERAL SUSPICION

With this, Kebba accurately summarises the consequences of Spanish-European border policy in Mauritania. In 2006, Nouadhibou was a hot spot for transmigration to the Canary Islands. Every night, hundreds of migrants boarded pirogues, long, wooden boats. In 2006 alone, more than 30,000 migrants reached the islands, and countless others drowned or died of thirst at sea. Spain and the European border security agency Frontex intercepted many boats, but only when the Spanish constabulary together with Mauritanian scouts started to patrol the harbour and the coast off Nouadhibou, were the boats stopped permanently. Those apprehended were sent to ‘Guantanamo’ – a school converted into an internment camp by the Spanish army – and promptly deported to Mali or Senegal. The international fight against so-called ‘irregular migration’ was won, at least in Nouadhibou. On land, a special police unit in black uniforms hunted transit migrants in the densely populated areas of the old town and the harbour. They were arrested, beaten and shunted off into the desert. Increasingly even those immigrants who had been living and working in Nouadhibou for a long time were affected.

Europe had achieved its aim. Nowadays there is no irregular transmigration from Mauritania to Europe to speak of. The Spanish Red Cross, which – financed by Spanish development aid – had given a humanitarian appearance to the internment of migrants in the camp, has long gone. The so-call

‘western route’ does not exist any longer; nowadays those who try to find a transit route into Europe look elsewhere. A success story?

The European Union, and especially Spain, won the fight against transit migrants in Mauritania because they were able to enlist the Mauritanian government in their combat against migrants. As early as 2006, Spain signed several agreements with Mauritania that promised co-operation in return for money and a supply of equipment. The autocratic regime in Mauritania was interested in European funds, eagerly participated in conferences on migration management organised by Europe, and even allowed the Spanish Guardia Civil to set up a camp in Mauritania and to jointly patrol the harbours and beaches with the Mauritanian coast guard. An officer of the Mauritanian Garde de Côtes proudly shows me assets financed by Spain: agile four-wheel drive vehicles for beach patrols, boats and launches to keep fishing boats under surveillance, binoculars and night vision equipment. A spy plane also has passed into Mauritanian hands, and the harbours are under video surveillance. But it is mainly development aid with which the combat against migrants is bought. In 2006, Spanish payments of development aid rose rapidly, only to fall again drastically in 2009, when the boat journeys from Mauritania to the Canaries had all but stopped. The European Union has more stamina. Directly or through Spain, and with considerable sums of money, it finances measures aimed at strengthening governance, and, above all, the control and surveillance of the population and the borders. State-of-the-art electronics and numerous checkpoints are employed to register and prevent the entry of migrants – not only at sea borders, but also, and especially, at the distant porous borders with Senegal and Mali. Foreign nationals are required to carry ID and to consent to having their biometric data collected. Considerable pressure was going to be exerted to push through these measures. Mauritania only suspended some of the restrictions after massive protests and threats by neighbouring countries. The country is economically dependent on several tens of thousands of migrants that live in Mauritania. Mauritania’s economy is already suffering under the number of migrants leaving the country; Mauritanian employers are unable to find migrants in Nouadhibou to work in the new fish processing plants.

## MAURITANIA

**Mauritania** is located on the west coast of Africa. The largest part of the area measuring more than one million square kilometres consists of desert and semi-desert. Less than 1% of the surface area is usable for agriculture. The population is concentrated on the coastal strip (around 750 kilometres in length), and in the south along the Senegal River.

**Population:** In 2013, around 3.44 million, of whom more than 40% were living in cities.

**Emigration:** Between three and five per cent of the Mauritanian population live abroad.

**Economy:** About half the population live on agriculture and stock farming. Fishing and fish processing are gaining in importance. Iron ore accounts for around 40% of export revenues.

**Immigration:** estimates lie between 99,200 (2010) and 79,400 (2007).

**Remittances:** estimated to be around 145m US dollars in 2012.

**GDP 2012:** The GDP is estimated to be around 7.824bn US dollars; the per-capita income is about 2,200 US-dollars.

**Human Development Index 2012:**

0.467 (115th place).

**Government:** President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz came to power in 2008 after a military coup and legitimised his power in the summer 2009 through presidential elections. The military still has a strong influence on politics.

between the Moors and the sub-Saharan migrants are difficult. Mauritania has not yet overcome its history as a slaveholder society, and was a nation of nomads as recently as the 1970s. There were hardly any labourers and craftsmen for the construction of towns and infrastructure, for mining corporations and fisheries. Already during the French colonial period a much-needed labour force was brought into the country from Senegal, Mali and other West African countries, but as labourers and because they are black they are still not respected very highly today.

Most migrants in Mauritania entered legitimately and legally. “This immigration is not formalised, managed or controlled by the state. It is therefore neither a transgression nor illegal, it is simply consigned to the realm of the informal”, writes the Mauritanian sociologist Ali Bensâad. All West African nations benefit from migration to a certain degree, either through their own nationals living in neighbouring states, or through immigration from those countries. With this wide-ranging liberality, the nations of West Africa have allowed an uncomplicated social attitude towards migration to flourish. This also conforms to the agreements made within the scope of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose integration was actively promoted by the EU for many years. The presence of migrants is completely normal in all West African countries. That presence is hardly subject to any rules, and for that reason alone cannot be irregular. The fact that mobility acts as an economic motor for all West African nations is a further reason why ECOWAS is in favour of a liberal approach to migration. It is not only Mauritania that clearly benefits from the presence of Senegalese fishermen, Malian mine workers and construction workers from Guinea Bissau. The interference by the European Union and its member states undermines this liberality through the introduction of controls, administrative regulations and criminal offences that advance an arbitrary ‘irregularisation’ and criminalisation of migration and migrants.

By now, open xenophobia among the security forces and the general population has become commonplace. It was fuelled to such an extent by the fight against transit migrants that the Mauritanian human rights organisation Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme (AMDH) warned of an increasingly racist approach to immigrants. Ne-

## LIFE IN A CLASS SOCIETY

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Kebba has had many jobs in Nouadhibou; as a fisherman, trader and builder. He tells me that it is difficult to work in Mauritania. Many jobs are now reserved for Mauritanians; not only fishermen, but also taxi drivers and bricklayers are only employed if they are Mauritanian. Kebba is the leader of the small local Gambian community, a position that only creates hassle, he tells me. There are not many Gambians left here, maybe 200 – in the past there were nearly 2,000. But since Nouadhibou has become the end of the line, many have moved away, Kebba says. He stayed on. He tells me that he owns a restaurant now – later on I find out that in fact he owns two. It is better for migrants not to display wealth, so as to not encourage jealousy. Relations



↑ **THE DETENTION CAMP GUANTANAMITO IN NOUADHIBOU,  
A NOW ABANDONED PLACE OF DEPORTATION**

vertheless, some migrants have become successful business people – as long as they are prepared to take on Mauritanian business partners and make adequate tribute payments. Well-to-do and long-

established traders have advanced to the position of local community leaders. They had the necessary connections to the authorities and were able to help their compatriots in times of need. This did





↑ **THE COAST GUARD CONTROLS ALL ARRIVING AND DEPARTING BOATS AND COLLECTS “FEES”**

not always happen quite as altruistically as Kebba describes it. In particular, arrivals of large groups of transit migrants brought a lot of money into town. Everyone made good business out of the passing migrants, and it was especially the newly arrived who had to buy the solidarity of the leaders of their own community.

### ASSISTANCE FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

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The only organisation in Mauritania that supports migrants' rights in this situation is the human rights organisation AMDH. The association's lawyers regularly intervene in conflicts with the authorities or, following arbitrary arrests, get people out of jail. Maître Niang is convinced of the validity of his work: "The authorities have no idea of the rights migrants are entitled to. Often it is enough for me to go there and talk with the police or the judge, and the migrants are released."

The migrants, too, are not accustomed to support from Mauritanian quarters. When I attend a meeting of migrants from Guinea-Bissau in company of a young member of staff of AMDH, I am received

with curiosity and rather warily. The scepticism only subsides when we explain the work we are involved in. The people from Guinea-Bissau, who mainly work on building sites, tell us that they are often conned by the Mauritians, even though the Mauritians, in their opinion, know nothing about the building trade. Almost all of them have been in the town for ten years or more. They tell us that the conditions for migrants have worsened. The police raids and controls are pure harassment, and often cannot even be avoided by paying bribes.

Supported by the European Union and Spain, but also by the UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration and the International Labour Organisation, Mauritania has since 2006 created a migration policy that is based largely on surveillance. Visas and residence permits have become obligatory; those found without risk deportation. Several areas of Nouadhibou inhabited by migrants were razed, and the inhabitants had to find accommodation elsewhere.

Migrants are especially affected by the compulsory collection of biometric data crucial in obtaining residence permits and work permits. Justina can confirm this. In her capacity as leader of the Nigerian community she wanted to lead by example and made an effort to get papers early on. She paid the required 30,000 Oughiya – about €80 – for each member of her family and went to the capital Nouakchott on three occasions.

“In the past, when they came round for controls they used to knock on the door; nowadays just they kick the doors down.” We’re sitting in the courtyard of the Catholic mission, a contact point not just for Christians but also other migrants in Nouadhibou. Repeated raids have unnerved the migrants – now many of them only leave their houses when it is necessary. In the past, says Justina, they used to meet up regularly, but today cohesion is crumbling; many are constantly afraid and steer clear of the streets. The Nigerian community has also shrunk a lot. The mission run by Père Jérôme not only gives social support to all migrants but also essential medical treatment that would otherwise often be unaffordable: help for survival in a town that had turned into a dead end for migrants. Père Jérôme was here before in 2006, when he cared for stranded and sick migrants; and many of those who were washed up dead on the beaches were buried by him in the mission’s cemetery. Père Jérôme also works for stronger cohesion and co-operation between the various migrant communities, but the stubborn and pressurising control exerted by some of the community leaders has stood in the way of the necessary solidarity.

## EUROPE’S DUBIOUS SUCCESS

Spain’s skilful negotiations and European funds have created a situation in Mauritania in which migrants are left largely to their own devices. Mauritania has seen the introduction of a controlling regime in which migrants are under general suspicion. This was accomplished relatively easily because there are relatively few Mauritians among the migrants willing to leave. The criminalised image of a transit migrant is that of a black foreigner. The control of migrants fuels racism in a society whose identity between Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa has always been fraught with tension. While the transit has been stopped and many migrants have

left Nouadhibou, the surveillance programmes initiated by Europe are spreading even beyond Mauritania’s southern borders.

The migration analyst Ali Bensâad warns that Mauritania meanwhile runs the risk of creating an artificial irregularity by aligning itself with European demands and migration policy, all the while disregarding traditional migrational relations between Mauritania and its neighbours and running the risk of disturbing the socio-economic equilibrium.

In Mauritania, **medico international** supports the Association Mauritanienne des Droit d’Homme (AMDH) which provides legal advice and social support to migrants, as well as the Mission Catholique de Nouadhibou in its efforts to improve health provision for migrants.

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SENEGAL:

## Immobility instead of development

EMIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ARE INTERCONNECTED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. ONLY A EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY THAT PROMOTES SOCIAL PARTICIPATION CAN MINIMISE THE RISKS OF MIGRATION.



programmes by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank led to impoverishment. Especially the younger generation saw no opportunities and no prospects to start a family or build a house of their own. Thus, in 2006, St. Louis became a place of hope for those willing to emigrate – people not only from the poor suburbs and impoverished areas of Senegal, but also from neighbouring states.

Nowadays almost no one would consider setting off for the Canaries in a pirogue. The meagre catches made by small-time fishermen are also a consequence of the ever-increasing competition between the fishermen themselves. For lack of an alternative, more and more people try their luck in fishing, despite low returns and very little money to be made. Those in bigger pirogues try their luck in the richer fishing grounds of Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania, sometimes even without the appropriate licences. On land, many scrape together a living doing odd jobs and petty trading. The dire state of the economy, which was partly blamed on the policies of the deposed president Abdoulaye Wade, is a constant topic of conversation. For a brief moment, migration to the Canaries and from there to the European mainland seemed to offer a way out, but for many it was the “grand rendezvous with death”, as Gaoussou Guèye, vice president of the Senegalese artisanal fishing confederation, put it.

The port town of St. Louis is situated on the northern edge of Senegal, where the country borders Mauritania and the river Senegal flows into the Atlantic Ocean. This is where French colonial troops went ashore in 1659. For a long time, St. Louis was the capital of the French colony of Senegal, and for a brief period until 1902 it served as the colonial capital of French West Africa, a region that extended as far as today's Chad. Bridges lead from the city centre to an elongated spit of land where mainly the fishermen live. Sandy paths lead down to the beach between houses that are for the large part only one storey high. Here, in 2006, the first migrants put out to sea in Senegalese pirogues bound for The Canary Islands, Europe. An oppressive lack of perspective prevailed in Senegal. The devaluation of the CFA franc and the restructuring

## CO-OPERATION AGAINST THE 'ÉMIGRATION CLANDESTINE'

In actual fact, tells us Mme Yaye Bayam Diouf, many villages along the Senegalese coast share the experiences of Thiaroye sur Mer, a small town near Dakar: 210 young men and women were deported from the Canaries, 374 minors were held in a detention centre on the Canary Islands, and 156 young men and women disappeared during the crossing to the islands and left 88 orphan children behind. Madame Diouf not only recorded their names and stories, she also founded the Collectif des femmes pour la lutte contre l'émigration clandestine au Sénégal, COFLEC – as soon as the funeral ceremonies had ended, she tells us. She has gathered numerous relatives of victims of irregular migration around her, not only to provide hope for the future to them, but also to deter other young men from trying to reach the Canary Islands by crossing the sea. For the women and children left behind it was of crucial importance to find new means of income. Step by step, the collective developed courses teaching various trades and crafts, from fish processing to dyeing. This work could also involve girls that had been deported by Europe. Recently COFLEC received funding from the Senegalese Youth Ministry, and has co-operated with the African Development Bank (BAD) in a project designed to deter young people from migration.

There can hardly be a place where the bright hopes of those making the journey towards Europe and the mourning over the bodies of young men pulled from the sea are as close together as in Senegal. This might explain why the campaigns against irregular migration are not carried out by the Senegalese government and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) alone, but why relatives of victims and members of the general population also campaign against the dangerous crossings to the Canary Islands. For a few years there was a broad consensus in Senegalese public opinion against the hazardous migration attempts across the sea. Nowadays, though, tells us the musician Awadi, many take a more critical stance: it is Europe's policy of refugee and migrant defence that deserves criticism, not the risky crossings to the Canaries. However, between 2006 and 2009 much of the co-operation and collaboration between civilian initiatives, state authorities and international

organisations took place in an unspecific 'grey area', and often with eyes firmly fixed on European funds, distributed mainly by Spain. It seems that for some organisations the fight against irregular migration was not all about the creation of alternatives for migrants, but that this fight became an attractive proposition for those wanting to exploit new sources of capital. But because one motive does not always exclude the other, the tenet of a fight against the 'émigration clandestine' sometimes seems somewhat ambiguous. It is where the divergent narratives of two groups intersect: those who see emigration as a failure of Senegal's political class and demand new policies, and those who want to adopt Europe's fight against irregular migration as their own.

## SPAIN DEFENDS EUROPE

In 2006, migration from Senegal became the centre of international attention. The 'Crisis of Cayucos', as the mass arrival in the Canaries of migrants in fishing boats was referred to in the Spanish media, was the consequence of sealing off migration routes around Morocco and the Mediterranean Sea. Of the roughly 30,000 migrants who reached the Canary Islands in 2006, almost half were Senegalese. This wave of immigration triggered a hysterical reaction in the Spanish media. Previous attempts by Africans to scale the border fences of the Spanish exclaves Ceuta and Melilla in the autumn of 2005 had already led to heated political debates in Spain. The reactions to the renewed immigration via the Canary Islands forced the Spanish government's hand.

It is therefore not surprising that it was the Kingdom of Spain, and not the ex-colonial power France, that took on a leading role in the fight against irregular migration to Europe in Senegal. Since its independence, Senegal has maintained close diplomatic and economic ties with Spain. In 2006, when there were almost daily departures of hundreds of Senegalese and West African migrants towards the Canary Islands, Spain exploited its good relations with the Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade. It entered into close co-operation with the Senegalese government, which not included the joint combat against migrants at sea and on the coast, but also had a strong political component regarding development aid. The readmission of Senegalese migrants deported by Spain was negotiated



## SENEGAL

**Senegal** is located on the West African Atlantic coast. The country, with an area of nearly 200,000 square kilometres, is bordered in the north by the river Senegal. Agriculture and fisheries employ a large part of the population.

**Population:** The population of Senegal in 2009 was approximately 12.5 million, with an annual growth rate of about 2%. Senegal is characterized by strong rural migration and urbanisation.

**Emigration:** In 2011, approximately 636,200 Senegalese citizens were living abroad

**Immigration:** In 2013, the largest migrant communities originated from Mauritania (40,955), Guinea (39,594), Mali (26,103), Guinea Bissau (22,670), Sierra Leone (11,453) and France (10,652).

**Remittances:** In 2012, 1.367bn US dollars were transferred to Senegal, 290m of which came from France, 247m from Italy and 246m from Gambia.

**GDP:** 14.15bn US dollars. Phosphate mining, fertilizer production and fishing are the main export revenue.

**Human Development Index 2012:**

154th place.

**Government:** In 2012, President Macky Sall took over from his long-term predecessor Abdoulaye Wade; the Prime Minister is Aminata Touré.

Senegal became a partner nation in a project co-ordinated by the Spanish Guardia Civil. Going by the name of Seahorse Project, it aims at effective surveillance using radar, satellites and surveillance centres on the coasts in the West-Atlantic zone between the African mainland, Cape Verde and the Canary Islands. Under Spanish command, the Seahorse Project was expanded into the Mediterranean Sea and is generally seen as a precursor to Eurosur, a border surveillance system intended to monitor the entire border area of the European Union. But Spain won the Senegalese government's willingness to co-operate not only through shipments of weaponry for the Senegalese police force and coast guard, but also, and mainly, through development funds that were channelled into the combat against migrants. At the same time as the deployment of Frontex in Senegal was announced on May 19, 2006, the Spanish government under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero passed Plan África. Under this plan, guidelines on development policy are geared strongly towards combating the causes of migration, which are primarily seen to be rooted in the poverty of the population.

## TRADITIONS OF MIGRATION

Since the 1990s, it is above all a lack of perspectives and a dearth of employment opportunities that impel migrants to seek a route into Europe. However, migration from Senegal is not always and exclusively due to poverty, but is also a traditional common practice. The country is embedded into various migration patterns within the Maghreb and West African regions: large numbers of Senegalese traders and labourers establish communities in North- and Central African towns. Since the 1990s, Senegal has seen increased migration from rural into urban areas. A lack of employment opportunities in agriculture leads to rural flight especially of young people, to a casualisation of the workforce and a concurrent increasing dependency of Senegal on food imports. At the same time, Senegal is a destination for migrants from the neighbouring countries of Guinea, Gambia, Mali and Burkina Faso, and refugees from various African conflict areas. Measured by this regional mobility, only small numbers of Senegalese migrants are overseas, in the Gulf States or in Europe. Among the European nations, Senegal has a long history of migration especially with the former colonial

on a case-by-case basis, and Senegal repeatedly accepted considerable financial rewards in return for its consent to the deportations of its own citizens.

A double strategy was employed by Spain especially in Senegal: firstly, it won the support of the Senegalese government for close co-operation in the crackdown against migrants who wanted to reach the Canary Islands by boat. Spanish and Senegalese security forces carried out joint operations in Senegalese coastal waters, intercepting boats and forcing them back ashore. The Senegalese government had passed a law criminalising 'illegal emigration' as early as 2005. Not only the people smugglers, but also the migrants who used their services faced fines and imprisonment. The European Union gave Spain financial support for these operations. From the end of 2005, Frontex joined the fight against migration off the West African coast with its operations code-named 'Hera'. In addition,





↑ **SOME DISAPPEARED FOREVER, OTHERS WERE SENT BACK AND POOLED MONEY FOR A NEW BOAT. THEY ARE FISHING AGAIN IN KAYAR.**

power France. Senegalese nationals have long been coming to France as sailors and fought in the French army in large numbers in both World Wars and in the South East Asian conflicts. Since the 1950s many Senegalese have been working in French factories. It was only in the 1970s that France curbed immigration opportunities and introduced visas and stricter residency regulations. Subsequently immigration mainly took the form of family reunification or irregular entry, and as a result, Senegalese migrants have increasingly been going to Spain and Italy since the 1980s and 1990s. In 2005 – that is to say before the boat journeys to the Canary Islands – nearly 20,000 Senegalese citizens lived in Spain legally. This is why in Senegal there is some confusion as to why European nations increasingly isolate themselves from migrants and as to why migration to Europe is now denounced as being illegal.

## DEVELOPMENT AND EMIGRATION

It is mainly the migrants in Europe and North- and South America that support their families in Senegal through money transfers. They build houses, finance education and medical care and invest in businesses. According to the World Bank's calculations, money transfers into Senegal increased from \$233m to \$633m between 2000 and 2006. The funds and investments of migrants are an important and necessary source of capital for economic development in Senegal. However, this development often only benefits the families of migrants and not the population at large, and the resulting differentials in prosperity are responsible for the fact that emigration remains an attractive alternative to the lack of employment opportunities in many parts of Senegal. As most legal immigration opportunities into Europe have disappeared, alternative destination countries – such as the Gulf States or



↑ FISHMEN TELL MARIAME SOW ABOUT THE TIME WHEN THEIR SONS USED THE PIROGUES TO BRING PEOPLE TO SPAIN

Argentina – are explored, as well as illegal routes into Europe.

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Even before the exodus to the Canary Islands, Spain was engaged in close co-operation with Senegal, which enjoys the status of a privileged partner in Spanish development policy. In 2003 Spain opened an office for co-operation in technical development in Dakar. This formed the basis for the co-operation in development policy between the two states, whose focus on curbing migration anticipated the aims of the Spanish Plan África. Thereafter, in 2006, the plan REVA (Plan de retour vers l'agriculture) was agreed upon. This project led by the Senegalese government involved the creation of 550 modern model farms between 2006 and 2008, which were to directly create 300,000 jobs in agriculture and the marketing and shipping of produce, as well as many other jobs connected in some way to the project. Spain supported REVA with

€10m, and a further model project in Djilakh received an additional €530,000. The project, which is carried out with the participation of Spanish development organisations, has ambitious aims: to stimulate the agricultural development of Senegal, to bring about Senegal's self sufficiency on food products, and to promote the export of produce. Furthermore, land flight is to be stopped by providing attractive employment opportunities to young people in rural areas, and it is thought that the project could stop emigration to Europe by providing domestic alternatives. Lastly, under the plan's proposals returnees and deportees from Spain are to be integrated into agricultural production and thereby given a chance to re-integrate. The coinciding of Spain's provision of €10m for the project with the Senegalese's president's readiness to readmit deportees from Spain in the summer of 2006 would suggest that Spain bought consent for deportations to Senegal with development aid.

A high price for empty promises? A study conducted by Universidad Autonoma in Madrid found that by 2008 of all the REVA projects only the model project in Djilakh had been realised. At all other designated locations there were only signs indicating the planned creation of the farms. Even the project in Djilakh showed such a high number of shortcomings that the researchers in Madrid concluded that it would not be possible to realise the plan's high-flying aims. The attempt to get Senegalese youths interested in agriculture failed even in the model farm. This was due to mismanagement, centralised control, insufficient involvement of the local population, low wage prospects, crop failures and a one-sided focus on produce for export, among other factors. The integration of deportees in the project was also not realised.

## **THE RIGHT TO STAY, THE RIGHT TO GO**

The co-operation between Spain and Senegal is an example of the failure of a policy that seeks to combine migration and development. The collaboration at the level of government is a crucial reason for this failure. The Spanish and Senegalese governments are tied by a close co-operation, under which migrants and those willing to migrate are degraded to mere objects. This approach may work for surveillance and control but fails when it comes to development. Spanish and Senegalese interests in population- and mobility control only led to repressive solutions and failed to provide alternatives. The simple formula 'a fight against poverty, being a fight against the causes of migration, leads to less migration' is somewhat questionable. A development policy geared towards employment would provide migrants with opportunities to take advantage of alternatives. The example of Senegal demonstrates that a development policy that is devoted to combating migration will not be effective. The fishing industry makes plain how questionable the very premise is. There are countless Spanish ships sailing under Senegalese flags off the coast of Senegal that process their catch in Spain, and not in Senegal. Spanish and Senegalese businesses collude and circumvent existing regulations. Moreover, this process, through which thousands of jobs in the Senegalese fishing industry are lost, is subsidised by the EU. The negative consequences of such a policy cannot be compensated through dubious development projects.

While the demand for freedom of mobility should not be relinquished, the demand for the right to stay must persist, too: it is the right to a decent livelihood. Otherwise all that remains of freedom of movement is migration under duress.



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**“THE PASSPORT IS THE MOST NOBLE PART OF A HUMAN BEING”**

(BERTOLT BRECHT)

Washed-up passport on the beach of Lesvos.