



Borders of the EU – Borders of human rights?

Perspectives on the European Refugee Policy

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The current waves of democratisation bringing regime change and military confrontation to North Africa have triggered new waves of migration to Europe and within the region. These developments indicate once again the strength of the political, social and geographical ties between Africa, Europe and the Arab World. At the external borders of the European Union, many people seeking protection from persecution or searching for a decent life die. They look to escape the destruction of their livelihoods through war, climate change, unjust economic and trade relations and from violent and discriminating social conditions in their home countries.

Regardless of the thousands of victims, the EU Commission - like national governments - continues to pursue a policy of organised 'fencing off' against refugees and migrants. This fencing practice has damaged the credibility of the EU as political institution that stands for the defence of human rights.

These facts call for information and public education. At this international conference, NGOs from the Mediterranean area and individuals affected by the EU's policies will speak about their experience of human rights violations. Particular focus will be placed upon Libya's role as the "Gatekeeper" of Europe, the cooperation of the European Union and the Italian government with the Libyan dictatorship, as well as the change regarding refugees' escape routes and the exclusion measures in the south-east Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey.

The conference will not only act as a forum for information exchange, but also as a place for discussions about EU policies and the role of Germany within the EU framework.

What are the prospects perspectives for a humane immigration policy? What role do member countries play in the fencing and isolation policies of the EU? What role can civil society have in defending refugees and protecting human rights? How can Europe establish coherence between its development and refugee policies?