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THE EU HAS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

The humanitarian disaster in Lampedusa is not an individual case, every day people die at the European borders. The fortress Europe is not a fairy tale, it is reality and it becomes deadly for refugees all the time. There are walls, there are barb wire fences, there are FRONTEX "guards", who prevent people from even trying to enter Europe. But even if refugees manage and claim asylum, they can be sent back to a "safe third country" they had to pass while fleeing, where they might be sent back again to another and another country. This regulation is unacceptable and circumvents the Geneva refugee convention and therefore must be abolished.

Also a part of the Dublin II Regulation that states the so called "one-state-only" rule is a big problem. Especially for the southern European border countries, most of all Italy, Greece and Spain. The rule only allows to claim asylum in the first state that doesn't refuse the refugee the entry. For a lot of refugees this means that they have to come by ship to Europe, where they then get confronted with FRONTEX, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. The FRONTEX border guards prevent people from crossing the European border. NGOs reported cases where refugees were threatened to either be killed or sent back to death on the open sea.

The core task of FRONTEX is protecting Europe from refugees rather than protecting refugees. Refugees are very often banned from even getting the chance to claim asylum. The "one-state-only" rule has to be abandoned as well as FRONTEX has to be taken away from all refugee related operations. Europe should provide a fair and fast asylum procedure for every single refugee who crosses the European borders. Also the asylum reasons should be widened and the execution of asylum law should be harmonised. The treatment of refugees while the asylum process should be regulated and strictly surveilled.

Europe has a historical and an actual responsibility for many of the asylum reasons. European countries got rich on the expenses of the global south. Rather than building a fence around Europe, the EU is asked to harmonise and strengthen its development cooperation. The arms trade with crisis-hit countries should be forbidden. But also the European export subsidies must be regulated, as European products are sold for prices under the production rate in developing countries and take away the basis of existence for the people. In this regard Europe also has an obligation to care for the so called "economic refugees".

Europe was never, but proved once more that it is not worth the Nobel Peace Prize. Europe has the duty to take responsibility for its profit orientated, careless, exploitative economy, not only within the EU but also across the European borders.

No borders, no nation!

Done at Vilnius, Lithuania, on 19th October 2013.

The Bureau has mandated the Secretariat to carry out language corrections.

Thomas Maes, Secretary General.