



**Draft**

**Title:** **FORTRESS EUROPE? NO, THANKS! BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING DOWN WALLS, EXPLORING BORDERS (Alexander Langer)**

**Tabled by:** Europa Verde - Verdi

### **Draft text**

1 In October 2021, 12 EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia,  
2 Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia) asked  
3 the European Commission to finance the construction of walls along their borders  
4 using EU funds. In a letter to Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and  
5 Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, these countries stated that  
6 *"[p]hysical barriers appear to be an effective border protection measure that*  
7 *serves the interest of the whole EU, not just Member States of first arrival"*.  
8 Furthermore, they wrote that *"[t]his legitimate measure should be additionally*  
9 *and adequately funded from the EU budget as a matter of priority"*.

10 Meanwhile, more and more EU countries have already announced, started or  
11 completed plans to build walls and fences along their outer borders to keep out  
12 migrants and asylum seekers. Lithuania, one of the letter signatories, had  
13 already decided to build a 508-kilometre-long fence on the border with Belarus  
14 to stop the arrival of migrants, mainly from Iraq. Latvia also announced that it  
15 would build a 134-kilometre-long barbed-wire fence at the border with Belarus.  
16 Poland has announced a 2.5-metre-high wall modelled on that built by Hungary on  
17 its border with Serbia in 2015. Greece has built a 40-kilometre fence on its  
18 border with Turkey to keep out potential Afghan refugees.

19 In this respect, Commissioner Johansson stated that: *"Member States have the*  
20 *right and responsibility to protect their borders. And they are in the best*  
21 *position to decide how to do this, as long as they comply with Union rules. If a*

22 *Member State believes that a fence needs to be built, it can do and I have*  
23 *nothing to object to.” Furthermore, she added: “Using Union funds to finance*  
24 *fences instead of financing other very important activities is a different*  
25 *matter, but here we talk about how to spend the limited resources. But Member*  
26 *States have the possibility and the right to build these fences and they are at*  
27 *the best position to decide whether this is necessary or not.” She reiterated:*  
28 *“I agree that we need to strengthen the protection of our external borders. I*  
29 *must say that some Member States have built protection structures and I can*  
30 *understand it. If EU funds must be used to do this, I must say no.”*

31 The Pact on Migration and Asylum, proposed by the European Commission in  
32 September 2020 following a fire that destroyed the Moria refugee camp in Greece,  
33 also goes in the direction of externalising borders, based on pillars such as  
34 outsourcing and repatriating.

35 Incumbent Chancellor of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg, who governs in  
36 coalition with the Greens, shares with former Chancellor Sebastian Kurz the  
37 policy of closing the borders to migration flows, especially from the Balkan  
38 route, thereby showing their proximity to the sovereigntist position taken by the  
39 Visegrad Group countries. Indeed, Austria is one of the 12 Member States asking  
40 the European Union to finance the construction of walls and structures to stop  
41 the arrival of “illegal migrants”.

42 Four years ago, European leaders reproached former US President Donald Trump for  
43 his plan to build a wall on the country’s southern border with Mexico. “*We have*  
44 *a history and a tradition that we celebrate when walls are brought down and*  
45 *bridges are built,”* admonished Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign policy chief  
46 at that time.

47 **The European Green Party:**

48 1. Calls on the Greens in each Member State, in particular those in the 12  
49 countries which signed the letter in early October, to promote migration,  
50 political asylum, reception and integration policies, as established in  
51 the Statute, in the Charter of Values, and reaffirmed by past resolutions.

52 2. Calls on EU institutions to strongly condemn the construction of walls and  
53 the inhuman treatment to which migrants are subjected at all external  
54 borders of the Union.

- 55 3. Calls on EU institutions not to reinforce or finance policies for the  
56 externalisation of borders, as this type of policy has already proved  
57 ineffective since the end of the 1990s.
- 58 4. Calls for a more inclusive and fairer approach to the reception of asylum  
59 seekers and migrants among all Member States.
- 60 5. Calls on the Member States to welcome people in need of international  
61 protection and create additional humanitarian corridors to the EU.
- 62 6. Calls on EU institutions to condemn those actions that limit the freedom  
63 of movement for migrants within the Schengen area.

64 *Europa Verde – Verdi co-spokespersons*

65 *Eleonora Evi Angelo Bonelli*