



FORTRESS EUROPE? NO, THANKS!

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

Meanwhile, more and more EU countries have already announced, started or completed plans to build walls and fences along their outer borders to keep out migrants and asylum seekers. Lithuania, one of the letter signatories, had already decided to build a 508-kilometre-long fence on the border with Belarus to stop the arrival of migrants, mainly from Iraq. Latvia also announced that it would build a 134-kilometre-long barbed-wire fence at the border with Belarus. Poland has announced a 2.5-metre-high wall modelled on that built by Hungary on its border with Serbia in 2015. Greece has built a 40-kilometre fence on its border with Turkey to keep out potential Afghan refugees. Former Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz (and his successor Alexander Schallenberg shared his views) has pushed for the policy of closing the borders to migration flows, especially from the Balkan route, thereby showing their proximity to the sovereignist position taken by the Visegrad Group countries.

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

Four years ago, European leaders reproached former US President Donald Trump for his plan to build a wall on the country’s southern border with Mexico. Having overcome and torn down borders between former enemies is one of the EU’s great achievements, one that we must not roll back and one that has to inform our stance towards those who come to us in need.

The European Green Party:

- Calls on Greens in all Member States, in particular in the 12 countries which signed the letter in early October, to promote a fair and humane approach to migration, political asylum, reception and integration policies, governed by the rule of law - as established in the Statute, in the Charter of Values, and reaffirmed by past resolutions.
- Calls on EU institutions to strongly condemn the construction of walls, the militarisation of border management, including through Frontex and the inhumane treatment to which migrants are subjected at all external borders of the Union, like



the illegal push backs and pull backs.

- Calls for an urgent solution for the situation at the Polish and Belarusian border and the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean. The illegal pushing back of those seeking refuge and other human rights violations need to be condemned and stopped.
- Calls on EU institutions not to reinforce or finance policies for the externalisation of borders, their fortification or reestablishing of borders within.
- Calls on the EU and its Member States to refrain from creating deals like the ones with for example Libya, Turkey, etc.
- Calls on the EU institutions to strongly condemn the role of the EU's border agency, Frontex, in the illegal pushbacks of refugees and other human rights violations and to hold them accountable. We demand drastic reforms in Frontex, focusing on fixing the current mismanagement and at the same time strengthening their fundamental and human rights mandate.
- Calls for a more inclusive and fairer approach to the reception of asylum seekers and migrants among all Member States, also establishing legal and safe pathways.
- Calls on the Member States to defend the right to asylum and welcome people in need of international protection and create additional humanitarian corridors to the EU. Calls on EU institutions to consider freedom of movement as a human right and condemn those actions that limit this right.
- Calls on all governments in EU-external border countries to secure adequate reception conditions, including adequate conditions in refugee camps and to support rather than obstruct the work of humanitarian organisations as well as to allow access to independent monitors and media to assess the situation.
- Calls on the EU to step up its efforts in reducing the causes of forced migration through, among others, a preventive foreign and security policy, cross-sectional cooperation with destabilised and fragile areas and societies, climate policy and technological implementation of a Green Transition, and fair trade.
- Calls on the EU and its Member States to stop the ongoing criminalisation of the NGOs and other human rights activists that support migrants and/or rescue them in the sea.