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“Apps” and social media to assist refugees crossing the Mediterranean? We need more of these!

“The Federal Government is participating in rumours about ‘apps’ which inform refugees of ‘available boats’ and ‘conditions in various destination countries’ prior to an attempted crossing of the Mediterranean. Social media is also said to be used for this purpose. I view this as attempt to criminalise the assistance of refugees. I am only aware of such websites from human rights and humanitarian initiatives”, said Member of the Bundestag Andrej Hunko, in reaction to a reply from the Federal Ministry of the Interior to a minor interpellation.

Andrej Hunko continued:

“In the reply, those assisting refugees are however referred to only as ‘smugglers’ and accused of involvement in organised crime. This is the only way in which criminal police can be involved in combatting unwanted migration. In this context, Europol, the EU’s law enforcement agency, is promoting the creation of an African counterpart ‘Afripol’, while the EU Commission is financing a new police database for countries in West Africa.

Yet instead of using the police to prevent migration, the Federal Government needs to advocate options which save migrants from dangerous attempts to cross the Mediterranean. It therefore must reject European Police Chiefs’ proposal for increased funds for joint operations with African police. That also applies to the cooperation agreements negotiated by the EU border agency Frontex and Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Egypt. Attempts are being made to force the governments of Tunisia and Morocco into a deportation agreement, making the countries outposts of the EU’s inhumane migration policy.

The Italian Presidency is calling for the creation of an EU police centre in Libya or Tunisia. A similar centre is currently being set up in cooperation with Turkey. According to the Federal Government, it is to combat ‘terrorism, illegal immigration, human trafficking and organised crime’. I criticise in the strongest possible terms this equation of migration and crime and the failure to differentiate between the two.

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The Federal Ministry of the Interior is providing personnel and equipment for Frontex's new 'Triton' mission off the Italian coast. Italy is thus to stop its rescues from the Mediterranean, which it finances itself. This means that the German government shares responsibility for the deaths occurring every day in the sea: 'Triton' aims to destroy refugee boats, take the fingerprints of those on board and 'send them back without delay'. That is inhumane.

The Federal Government should instead lend its support to a paper submitted by the Austrian government entitled 'Safe lives'. This calls for the fair distribution of refugees within the EU, additional programmes for their resettlement and the creation of safe entry corridors".

Download the answer to the Minor Interpellation entitled "Creation of an EU police centre in Libya or Tunisia":
http://www.andrej-hunko.de/start/download/doc_download/517-sicherheitszusammenarbeit-mit-egypten-und-tunesien