



The power of people against poverty

Oxfam: grave abuse shows urgent need for shift on EU Migration Agenda

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The EU and its member states have made almost no effort to increase options for safe and regular migration, and show insufficient concern about the implications that their policies have on human rights and living conditions of asylum seekers in the EU and at its borders, said Oxfam today.

[A new report by the international agency \(https://oxf.am/2xXaNI0\)](https://oxf.am/2xXaNI0) exposes how the European Union's Migration Agenda needs an urgent shift in direction, and outlines eight guiding principles for a humane and effective migration policy in the EU. The report is based on first-hand experiences of some of the devastating impacts linked to the EU's Migration Agenda.

After two years of EU policies directed by the Migration Agenda, it is clear that EU institutions and member states have disproportionately focused on blocking irregular migration and reinforcing borders with little attention given to long-term, sustainable solutions. Oxfam has received testimonies of authorities physically attacking migrants at the Hungarian and Croatian borders, women and children being exposed to the risk of abuse in migration "hotspots" in Greece and Italy, and people being prevented from fleeing torture and rape in Libya, all as a result of EU policies.

Oxfam's Humanitarian Campaign Manager, Claire Seaward, said:

"European leaders repeatedly assert that the EU is founded on values of human rights. Yet they have backed anti-migrant and anti-refugee policies to win headlines and voters, and in doing so have sacrificed vulnerable people's safety and wellbeing. Let's be clear: Europe is turning its back on people in need and on the foundation of the European project.

"To regain respect and trust, European governments should immediately change their approach to respect basic human rights, protect migrants and refugees and work with countries to overcome poverty."

Unless there is a change of approach, Europe will continue denying people their right to seek asylum, exposing them to abuse and violence and putting at risk their ability to lift themselves out of poverty.

Notes to editors

- Download the [full report \(https://oxf.am/2xXaNI0\)](https://oxf.am/2xXaNI0).
- Policy experts are available for **interviews** in Brussels, as well as field staff working on the ground with refugees and other migrants.

- Oxfam offers **first-hand stories from the ground** to illustrate the effect of the Migration Agenda on people. These stories are available on request.
- Oxfam can provide high-resolution pictures for illustration and TV-quality footage showing the current situation of migrants.
- The [European Union Migration Agenda \(https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration_en\)](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration_en) determines the short- and long-term priorities for the EU on migration. It includes reinforcing the EU's external borders, strengthening the common asylum policy, developing a new policy on legal migration and reducing the incentives for irregular migration. In Oxfam's view, its [recent review by the European Commission \(https://oxf.am/2yGYp93\)](https://oxf.am/2yGYp93) ignores the gap between migration policy and people's reality.
- Examples on how Oxfam thinks the EU is sacrificing its values:
 - Lack of access to a [fair and transparent asylum process \(https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/reality-eu-turkey-statement\)](https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/reality-eu-turkey-statement) and [lack of respect for people's right to dignity \(https://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blogs/17-01-27-helping-women-migrants-regain-dignity\)](https://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blogs/17-01-27-helping-women-migrants-regain-dignity) with overcrowding and unsanitary conditions as a result
 - Lack of access to legal aid and [physical abuse at the Hungarian and Croatian borders with Serbia \(https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2017-04-06/exposed-abuses-migrants-state-officials-europes-borders\)](https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2017-04-06/exposed-abuses-migrants-state-officials-europes-borders).
 - [Rape, torture and slave labour \(https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/you-arent-human-any-more-migrants-expose-harrowing-situation-libya-and-impact-eu\)](https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/you-arent-human-any-more-migrants-expose-harrowing-situation-libya-and-impact-eu) are among the horrendous daily realities for people stuck in Libya trying to escape war, persecution and poverty in African countries.
 - Free movement: In 2016 the EU approved only one project, at a cost of €10m, to support African governments to work together to improve the free movement of people between countries in the Horn of Africa. In the same year, the EU allocated over €331m to border management, fighting trafficking, and preventing irregular movement.
- Read more about [Oxfam's work with refugees and other migrants \(https://www.oxfam.org/en/emergencies/refugee-and-migrant-crisis\)](https://www.oxfam.org/en/emergencies/refugee-and-migrant-crisis) in Europe and across the globe.

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