

New Frontex mandate a "wolf in sheep's clothing"

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During this morning's debate and vote on the Busuttil report to give new and stronger powers to Frontex, the agency responsible for managing and coordinating operations around the EU's external borders, Cornelia Ernst spoke of the agency's poor human rights track record, evoking the "painful images" from the Mediterranean where an estimated 2000 people drowned this year, and stressed that Frontex is the "wrong policy" for refugees in Europe.

"Refugees come to Europe not only for political reasons but for economic survival, because of hunger, civil wars or climate disasters in their own countries," she said

Although she recognised that the new mandate for Frontex outlined in the report was a "serious improvement" on the Commission's original proposal, she said it amounted to a "wolf in sheep's clothing".

"We don't need Frontex but a humanized refugee policy to deal with situations in Africa where people are living in dire conditions, an asylum system based on solidarity and a new neighbourhood policy more in tune with our values."

Speaking after the vote, Marie-Christine Vergiat said "we do not want this Europe, this fortress Europe that gives lessons in human rights and democracy and is unable to reach out and help thousands of refugees. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is currently investigating the deaths in the Mediterranean and the EU will have to account for its own failures".

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