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Press release

15 November 2012

The EU is becoming complicit in racism and fascism in Greece

“The European Union is supporting the Greek government’s inhuman migration policy by funding detention facilities. Racist crackdowns are connected to political pressure from Germany for fewer refugees to be allowed to enter the Schengen area,” said Andrej Hunko, Member of the Bundestag, in response to information provided by the German government about the EU’s financial support for Greece.

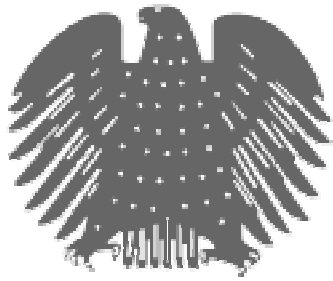
In its answer to his parliamentary question, the German government stated that Greece is receiving funding from several EU funds relating to migration policy. Funding is being provided for detention facilities in Athens, Elliniko, Aspropyrgos, Filakio, Orestiada and Karoti, for example. Greece’s National Action Plan on Asylum Reform and Migration Management is discussed at the meetings of EU home affairs ministers. Germany is pressing for additional financial incentives.

Andrej Hunko commented:

“The European Union is not only showing its authoritarian side in the financial crisis, as it dictates a hard-line policy of austerity to Greece with dramatic social consequences. It is also placing pressure on the government to prevent unwanted migration.

Germany and France have launched several initiatives to reform the Schengen regime. Together with other home affairs ministers, the two countries published a document entitled ‘Common responses to current challenges by Member States most affected by secondary mixed migration flows’. In a veiled reference to Greece, it warned governments to keep their ‘house in order’. Otherwise, other countries would react by reintroducing internal border controls.

Greece’s conservative-led government placated the EU Member States by launching a crackdown named ‘Operation Xenios Zeus’. To date, 48,402 people have been stopped and questioned and 3668 unwanted migrants detained. People are stopped on the basis of their appearance, in the assumption that they are foreigners.



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The measures launched via the EU level are fostering a growing racism, which the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn is channelling into what are essentially pogroms, with the tacit acceptance of the police. Videos show how migrants are being harassed, beaten and injured by fascists and by the police. According to the To Vima newspaper, more than half of all police officers vote for Golden Dawn.

The Greek government has deployed an additional 1800 police officers in its hunt for migrants in the border region near the River Evros. In several cases, refugees have been shot and killed there. A fence along the border and a trench constructed by the military are intended to keep migrants out in future. The Greek police is participating in an EU research project to develop robots for the surveillance of land borders. A deportation agreement between the EU and Turkey is close to being signed.

EU funding for new detention facilities is what has made the thousands of arrests possible in the first place. The Greek migration regime is also receiving support from Frontex, the EU's migration police. Germany recently increased its contribution to the Frontex operation 'Poseidon'.

Amnesty International, too, has criticised the unwillingness of the police to take action on the racist attacks. Instead, the victims are being intimidated and charges delayed. Amnesty International also refers to the mistreatment – verging on torture – of left-wing protestors at police stations. We are facing a new dimension of police violence. As in dictatorships, people are being dragged to police stations, without cause, and held there for several hours to be humiliated, threatened and mistreated.

The Council of the European Union is making the fight against unwanted migration in Greece one of its top priorities. And so the EU Member States are becoming accomplices of the fascist Golden Dawn, which is rapidly gaining ground. We must therefore urgently stand up to the authoritarian and 'austeritarian' EU."

An English translation of the answer from the German government is available here: <http://www.andrej-hunko.de/bt/parlam-init/fragen/1317-eu-financial-support-for-the-construction-and-or-renovation-of-greek-detention-centres>

The answer from the German government can be downloaded in German here: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/17/17200.pdf>