

Press release

## After the 'Open Access Now' campaign: mobilisation

# CLOSETHECAMPS

On 18 June 2010, the [Migreurop](#) network decided to make a stand against the detention of foreigners.<sup>1</sup>

Launched in 2011<sup>2</sup>, the '[Open Access Now](#)' campaign aimed to publicise the unseen realities of immigration detention, its excesses and the rights violations that flow from it. The campaign demanded total transparency and unconditional access to information and to locations where people are deprived of their liberty, for journalists and for civil society.

In order to alert civil society and politicians to the administrative detention of people who are migrating and to demand a change in migration policies in Europe and beyond, actions were taken in the period 2012-2015:

- > campaigns of [visits](#) to places of immigration detention with national and European parliamentarians, members of civil society, and journalists, linked to local citizen mobilisations (citizens' observatories near detention centres, for example)
- > setting up tools to accompany the [organisation of these visits](#), to publicise the spread of immigration detention (e.g. the dynamic cartography in December 2013 of '[Close the Camps](#) ') and to publicise breaches of human rights in places of detention (the booklet '[The hidden face of immigration detention camps in Europe](#)', [press releases](#))
- > collecting witness [statements](#) from people presently or previously detained and from visitors to detention centres
- > lobbying parliamentarians (e.g. evidence to the European Commission concerning its assessment of the 'Returns Directive' as regards immigration detention ; parliamentary questions about access for NGOs to immigration detention [centres](#) and about [statistics](#) about their functioning – [length](#) of detention etc.)
- > organising meetings, demonstrations and debates about the detention of foreigners (such as the April 2015 round-table at the European Parliament under the title '[We have the right to know, they demand to be free](#)').

Whatever you call them<sup>3</sup>, camps for foreigners have become a key instrument of migration policies and their widespread use has become banalised.

Yet, all the research and on the spot observation lead to the conclusion that the deprivation of liberty, whatever form it takes, leads to the violation of human rights, and serves as a policy of criminalising foreigners. Far from diminishing, the number of detention centres has increased, both within Europe and beyond its borders, where the EU exports this 'model', delegating its repressive policy to other countries.

The 'refugee crisis' in reality exposes a crisis in the migration and refugee policies of the EU. On its territory and in particular at its frontiers, formal and informal camps are multiplying. The degree of deprivation of liberty varies, but the logic at work is the same: rejection and separation; sorting and selection through the 'hotspot' approach; violation of fundamental rights. From such places, those people detained are sometimes moved to places designed more specifically for their expulsion.

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<sup>1</sup> '[For the closure of all camps for migrants in Europe and beyond](#)', Migreurop, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> An extension of the '[For a right of access](#)' campaign (2008-2011).

<sup>3</sup> See the map '[Euphemisms of camps in Europe](#)', Migreurop, 2014.

The main aim of current policies remains that of limiting as far as possible the number of foreigners received in Europe. The same place where a chosen few are welcomed becomes the place where people are deprived of their liberty and from which they are expelled.

In the face of the increase in immigration detention, following the 'Open Access Now' campaign, in the years ahead Migreurop will give priority to campaigning for the closure of all the detention camps for foreigners in Europe and beyond, under the slogan 'Close the Camps'.

The 'Close the Camps' mobilisation will aim to better expose detention centres including their new forms, to familiarise the public with them, in order to demand different policies

The first actions of this mobilisation are already in train and will result in late 2016/early 2017 in an online interactive cartographic application about different national arrangements as regards immigration detention; translation into Arabic of the 'Close the Camps' dynamic cartography website; publication of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the ['Map of the Camps'](#); and information notes on the EU's 'hotspot' policy approach.

Because the issue of immigration detention has never been more pressing, Migreurop encourages the different players in society (parliamentarians, NGOs, the media, private citizens) to continue to exercise their right to scrutinise the policies pursued in our name, to denounce these policies and their consequences<sup>4</sup>, in order to develop new ones based on the freedom of movement.

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<sup>4</sup> Migreurop will continue to support mobilisation and initiatives, such as a visit to the 'hotspot' at Pozzallo in Sicily on 14 May last in the framework of the ['Sabir'](#) festival and in collaboration with the French MEP Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL) and the Italian parliamentarians Erasmo Palazzotto (member of parliament) and Franco Campanella (senator) of 'Sinistra Italiana - Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà'.