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Press release

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EU members' warships must not be deployed against refugees off the coast of Lampedusa!

"Using the Navy and Air Force to combat migration would be an inconceivable militarisation of EU policy on refugees. The German government must take immediate steps to ensure that this proposal never becomes reality," said Andrej Hunko, Member of the German Bundestag, in response to a paper published by the European External Action Service (EEAS) on 19 November.

The EEAS has suggested that EU militaries and a NATO maritime group should support the work of the EU border police, FRONTEX, in the Mediterranean. It has also proposed cooperation with Italy, which is using warships, military aircraft and drones to track down migrants off the Libyan coast in an operation named "Mare Nostrum". Italy might even lead the EU operation, with its headquarters being established in Rome.

Andrej Hunko continued:

"Further militarisation of border surveillance will make crossings even riskier and lead to even more deaths. The EEAS even confirms this. The inhumane and frequently criticised approach taken by the EU border police, FRONTEX, is being reinforced.

In addition, the EU's new border surveillance system, EUROSUR, will enter into operation on 2 December. Images and data gathered by border-police and military reconnaissance will be transmitted in real time to the FRONTEX headquarters in Warsaw.

As part of the EU operation, the Arab Spring countries are also to be pressed to militarise their migration policy. The EEAS expressly calls for the participation of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya to be facilitated. As their border police do not have adequate surveillance capacities, these countries could contribute military capacities instead.

The EEAS also unequivocally states the true aim of the EU military operation: it would build pressure in negotiations with Morocco and Turkey on 'readmission agreements', which would allow unwanted migrants to be easily deported to these countries. According to the EEAS, the Turkish government could, if it participates, even stand to gain in terms of its EU accession negotiations.



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Deploying warships against refugees is inhumane, and completely misses the heart of the problem. It sends a fatal signal and is the very opposite of a neighbourhood policy based on solidarity.

The Left Party parliamentary group in the Bundestag calls for FRONTEX to be dismantled and abolished. In addition, the border surveillance system EUROSUR must never be allowed to enter into operation."

EEAS paper "Possible Avenues for Dialogue and Cooperation with Partner Countries, including Options for a CSDP Operation", dated 19 November 2013:
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st16/st16394.en13.pdf>