

Conference Statement "Walled World Europe"

We, the signatories of this petition,

Underscore the entitlement of everyone to all rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (UDHR, art. 2);

Emphasize that all men are free and equal in dignity, right to life, right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of their family (UDHR art. 1, 3, 25)

Are concerned about the large numbers of refugees dying at the external borders of Europe (14,000 persons documented since 1988¹);

Consider

- That there is a direct link between strengthened European border control and the increased number of casualties among boat refugees. The border patrols make it harder for immigrants to reach Europe and many of them are therefore forced to choose dangerous escape routes²;
- That the (member States of the) European Union provides practical and financial assistance to border countries preventing migrants from entering Europe, while it is at the same time conceit of the fact that fundamental rights of migrants in these countries are violated³;
- That there is no official European body which is accountable for the victims of the European policy of immigration restrictions and border controls. Nor is any European body responsible or accountable for preventing new casualties among refugees and migrants;
- That there is a significant lack of awareness of the problems at the borders of Europe, among the public, politicians and civil society in Europe.

Are of the opinion

- That it is the responsibility of both the EU and of any national European government, to prevent casualties as a result of immigration laws and border controls;
- That the European border controls, practiced by Frontex, do not sufficiently take into account the rights of individuals, including legitimate asylum seekers⁴;
- That the treatment of (boat) refugees in the southern European states is below acceptable standards⁵. On the other hand, the northern European countries could do more to assist their southern neighbors in addressing this issue;
- That the migration issue should be seen, understood and addressed in a broader economic and (geo)political context. European foreign and economic policies that actively strive for development, protection of human rights and good governance in countries outside the European Union, could prevent people from deciding to seek to migrate to Europe.

Recommend to the Dutch government to take responsibility in proposing a European policy on the protection of (boat) refugees.

Recommend to the European Commission:

- To develop a plan to ensure that much less refugees each year die at the frontiers of Europe;
- To establish or designate a European body which explicitly commits itself to reducing the number of these victims and which may be held liable or publicly accountable for this purpose.

¹ <http://owni.eu>

² Thomas Spijkerboer, The Human Costs of Border Control. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 9(2007), 147-161

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/opinion/19lucht.html?_r=1n

⁴ http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE_BRC%20Response%20to%20HoL%20Frontex%20Inquiry%20Sept07.pdf

⁵ <http://www.amnesty.eu/static/documents/2010/GreeceDublinIIReport.pdf>

- To investigate the exact number of people who die at the European borders and make it public;
- To adapt the economic and foreign policies of the European Union in such a way that improved conditions and increased prosperity and freedom in countries outside Europe make migration less necessary.

Recommend European non-governmental organizations to consistently address the fate of boat refugees in their projects and advocacy trajectories.

¹ <http://owni.eu>

² Thomas Spijkerboer, The Human Costs of Border Control. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 9(2007), 147-161

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/opinion/19lucht.html?_r=1n

⁴ http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE_BRC%20Response%20to%20HoL%20Frontex%20Inquiry%20Sept07.pdf

⁵ <http://www.amnesty.eu/static/documents/2010/GreeceDublinIIReport.pdf>