



shahnoza
nigeria REFUGEE

10 YEARS NETWORK **WELCOME TO EUROPE**

10 YEARS AFTER
THE NOBORDER
CAMP LESVOS 09

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Intro

For us it was the most inspiring Noborder camp, which we ever have organized. In Lesbos in late summer 2009 about 400 noborder activists from various countries met together with hundreds of refugees and migrants, who just had arrived from Turkey with small boats on the coasts of this Greek island. Some weeks before already strong protests started in the detention prison “Pangani,” at the margin of the capital city of Mytilene. Ongoing rebellions from inside and demonstrations and scandalization from outside finally led to the closure off this “hell of Dantes Inferno,” an important success against the EU policy of determent. During the noborder camp an info point was established at the port of Mytilene, which became a crucial and vivid meeting point for a week of common fights for freedom of movement.

In the middle of these struggles the idea of Welcome to Europe (w2eu) was born: to build daily structures and to provide useful multilingual information to empower and to support refugees and migrants in transit for their right to move to their desired destination. We tried

to build links to the various countries of arrival and destination and within the years the network grew with every friend who arrived somewhere.

In September 2019 it is 10 years ago and we look back to an impressive common history of coming together and projects, of protest and of commemoration, and last not least of innumerable friendships, which spread with and through w2eu all over Europe.

In this brochure we want to highlight some milestones of our network during this decade. We assembled a mixture of chronology and documentation, of personal stories and reports, of quotations and photos. We hope it will offer an interesting and exciting review on the last years.

Against the background of the ongoing roll back of the deathly EU border regime this booklet is also a promise for the future: we will tear down these borders and will go on with our struggle until freedom of movement and equal rights will be reality for everybody.



Infrastructure for freedom of movement

The backbones of our network

The network Welcome to Europe consists of close contacts and friendships. It has remained an activist and grassroots network since ten years. Out of our experiences open borders are the only option to stop the suffering we have often enough witnessed. No one is illegal.

There are some (and really not too many) people who create the backbone of the network, because they stay committed and continue to work on a daily basis to keep it alive. All of us work

on a voluntary basis – but no one would describe themselves as “volunteers”. We are activists, we are fighters for freedom and for equal rights for everyone.

Very often we receive requests for internships with Welcome to Europe. This is not possible, because we have maybe one of the slimmest structures when we compare it with the reach-out size of the network. It is for all of us the first time that we managed to build such a mixed network of this size and to keep it so long. It is still an ongoing experiment.

There are a few infrastructural backbones and we will describe some of them in the first chapter on the next pages:

1) Journeys back to the border

In the journeys back to the border and other smaller tours and trips we come together in bigger or smaller groups. There are many friends, who see being part of Welcome to Europe as a part of their own history when they came to Europe and stayed. They often did the journey over the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea by boat themselves and they stayed in a relationship with each other.

SEE PAGE ➡ 8–11

2) Infomobile

The Infomobile is a project of mobile information exchange with migrants and refugees, information for, from and about them and networking with local and international structures of resistance. Most of the time it is also a physical mobile, a small van used for trips to different places in Greece, we just started to use our second one, as the first was on the road from 2010. It is a grassroots initiative with a small group of people working on it permanently and a changing group of individuals adding to the Tour Teams. The Infomobile visits hubs of migration in Greece, such as Lesbos, Patras, Igoumenitsa, Evros, Idomeni, various camps on the mainland in Greece and Athens but also outside of Greece in neighbouring countries. You will find on many pages of the chronology the traces of infomobile.

3) w2eu.info – webguide

Since it was developed in 2010 the web-

guide provides in its minimum contacts in nearly all European countries of arrival and of transit and also in various transit-countries around the Mediterranean. Many country sections are fed with various thematical chapters about the factual rights and situations in each place. The information is given in four languages: Arabic, English, Farsi and French. Ever since, the webguide has developed as a tool that is used a lot by migrant/refugee communities all along the different routes and in different points of their escape: Before the departure, if people are stuck in transit and upon arrival, by those who face problems and deportation threats. Information against the fear and for the right to stay for everyone is the attempt to do counselling in an empowering way combined with the information the webguide publishes. W2eu.info became also a tool for networking and is used a lot not only by people on the journey but also by activist to get in touch and find help in case it is needed. The webguide since 2010 accompanies all other projects by providing useful information.

4) 2 solidarity flats in Athens, the Welcome Islands

In September 2011 we opened our first solidarity flat for homeless refugees in Athens. The second flat followed in 2014. Since then many different people have been living there.

SEE PAGE ➡ 12–13

5) Manifold printings and Info-guides for counselling in transit

Especially the welcome guides of Welcome to Greece, Welcome to Italy and since last year also Welcome to Spain

have been used very widely. Information on the way are too often not dedicated to the questions and the plans of the people. In countries of transit refugees and migrants need first of all a deep respect for their struggle for freedom of movement and the right to live in dignity. Welcome to Europe meant also to develop a way to transmit information in the same moment then solidarity.

SEE PAGE ➡ 14–15, 48–49, 61–62 & 67–68

6) The infomobile-blog (infomobile.w2eu.net)

is used to provide information from various places of struggle for freedom of movement in Greece and its borders. In the text on the documentation of hungerstrikes and protests inside of deten-

tions we try to show how important it is to make these struggles visible.

SEE PAGE ➡ 16–17

7) Sister projects like Bags Mohajer and Boza Tracks

W2eu was also an inspiration and got inspired for and by many other struggles and ideas. Two of our closest sister and brother projects are the bag-sewing-project of “Bags Mohajer” and the music collective “Boza Tracks”.

SEE PAGE ➡ 18–19

W2eu funds it's activities only by private and political donations and in rare cases by money by the foundation of Stiftung Do and Medico International.



2013/2014/2015

Three journeys back to the border

“Finally, I would like to say what I learnt there. When I learnt the word ‘beauty’ I thought it only means ‘to look at someone or something that gives you great pleasure.’ It appears I was wrong. After our supportive and break-isolation Moria party, I now realized that beauty means solidarity. I now discovered that solidarity is the most beautiful thing on earth.”

Karim, 2014

In 2013, 2014 and 2015 “Journeys back to the border” were organised to bring together the experience of those who had arrived in the years before with the dynamic of the newcomers. We travelled together to Lesbos the place of first arrival of some of us and for many also the place of our first encounter. Youth without Borders (JOG), a self-organisation of young refugees in Germany organised these journeys together with Welcome to Europe. These journeys were full of energy, and sometimes we reached all our limits. Nevertheless, for everyone involved the journeys have been experiments of solidarity and an experience we will never forget.

2013:

In October 2013 we travelled together to Lesbos. We came via Lesbos and/or Greece to Europe, most of us some years ago and we are living now in different cities in Germany and Sweden. We finally got a right to stay and arrived. And we want to start a journey back to the border to track back our own traces to Europe. A lot of us have made our first

steps on European soil on your island. And many of us have been in Pagani, this very bad place on your island that is now history – after a long and hard struggle from in-side and outside. We have made a lot of bitter experiences in Greece – but we have also met you and others who had been in solidarity with our struggle. Also today refugees arrive on Lesbos, among them unaccompanied minor refugees, like us. They are like we have been, without help and support. As we said already we have made a lot of bitter experiences: we have survived the dangerous trip on the small boats, we have seen prisons and violence by the police. We have experienced homelessness and push-backs and racist attacks also on our further journey and with the finger-prints the border followed us until our countries of destination. But we have also seen you and many others who helped us.

It was a hard and dangerous trip, but we have been on the move. But afterwards we discovered that there is another, we call it the “inner border”. Nowadays we struggle with the clock in the morning that reminds us for the date in the mi-

gration office, for the pressure to find a low paid job. If we want to meet friends we have to check our calendars. Everyday they remind us our place: in the low wage segment as cleaners or on the construction sites. You can imagine that we will not accept this border as well.

We want to invite you to search together for the traces of our common struggle against the borders – the outer and the inner ones. We want to exchange experiences. We want to tell you our stories

of resistance and to listen to yours. We want to mourn all those who had been senselessly dying in the sea and cannot be with us. We want to protest and struggle against the inhuman European borderregime. We see it as another step for organising networks across borders and discuss about future strategies and to where this journey might bring us.

(...) We want to come together to fight the inner and the outer borders that are made to separate us. For us and for everybody. For another Europe that says “Welcome”.

SOURCE → <https://t1p.de/0u9x>



2014:

We came back to Lesvos in August 2014. We returned once again to the outer border of Europe which was for many of us the place of our first arrival here. Again it was a journey that was full of memories, full of new encounters with people who experience today what many of us have been facing in the past. (...) There were young people who have already received a right to stay in Germany and Sweden and who came back to meet with those who didn't yet find a way out of Greece. From Athens a whole group of refugees came who currently live in the "Welcome Island" and some who are friends we knew from our camping last year in Lesvos or from the tours in Greece and Turkey. (...) We experienced incredible days on Lesvos, days full of memories of our own suffer-

ing but also our own success stories. We welcomed the newly arrived and we had many encounters at the harbour of Mytilene when people left to continue their journeys. We mourned those who didn't arrive but died at this border. We protested against the prison close to the village of Moria and we overcame the fence with music. We had a lot of incredible parties in PIKPA, the self organised welcome centre. Finally, we promised to come back again! Until this border becomes history.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/qnzc>

2015:

When we arrived on Lesvos, there were thousands already there. Seeing them camped in the Mitilini harbour told us

that this trip would be our biggest challenge yet. Shortly after our trip ended, the impossible happened: following the 'march of hope' from Budapest to Austria and on to Germany, the borders of the Balkan states were open for several months. The journey from Greece was safer than ever and traffickers were out of work because no one needed them. A long summer that lasted well into the winter and showed us what was possible. While we are writing this, the border regime has come back with a vengeance. The borders along the Balkans route are shut once again and the struggle for freedom of movement has come to a head.

"During the camp, we did a painting activity with the kids at the harbour, in order to allow them to process their experiences and also to relax. They loved

it and asked if we were coming back the next day. We went back every day and played with them. We gave them paper, street chalk and lots of pens, and they played with them well. At first they hesitated to join in, but after a while all the kids around us came and painted. What really touched me were the pictures they drew, of ships and police and water, and what they said about their experience. That was special. They tried to process what they had experienced through painting. One little girl, maybe four years old, asked me to draw a ship with police and people for her, and she told me, the police were bad, they tried to beat us. Her name is Kadishe, the same name as my sister, that is why I remember her. She talked a lot." Mariam, summer 2015

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/p836>



'Islands of Welcome': Two small flats in Athens

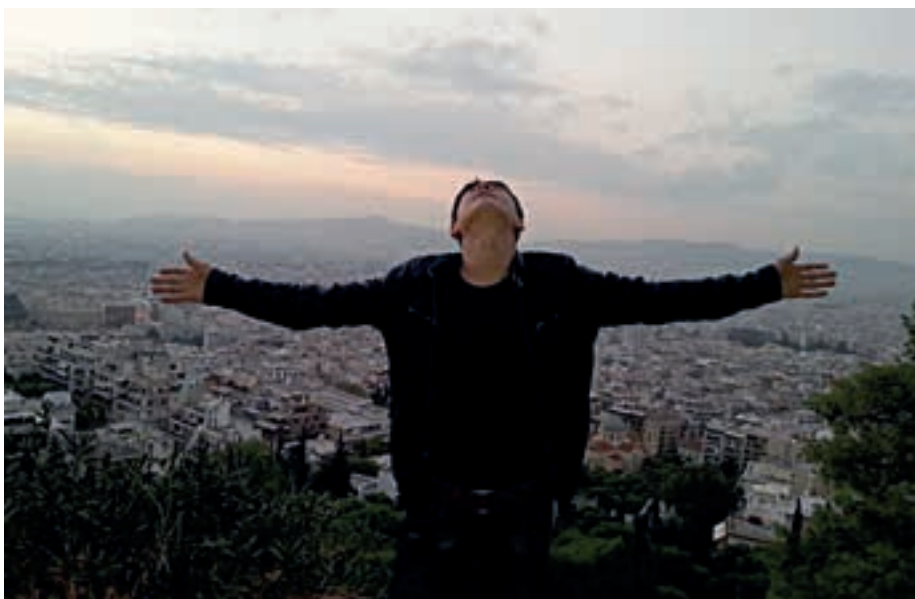
In September 2011 we opened our first solidarity flat for homeless refugees in Athens. The second flat followed in 2014. Since then, the housing situation has changed as often as the overall situation for refugees in Greece. The project reflects the daily struggle for everybody's rights and for another world on a tiny scale – islands of hope in a sea of injustice. Thus we called these two solidarity shelters „welcome islands” because we wanted to create spaces that offer both peace and protection, spaces that are a home and a place of encounter through the support and participation of many friends on the spot and from afar!

2011: The Welcome Islands were first a home for torture victims and people with psychological problems, who had lived

homeless for years. They were among those for whom there was no space in the state accommodation.

2012/2013: Then from winter 2012/2013 onwards, after massive police raids throughout Greece, through which hundreds of paperless people often ended up in administrative detention for months, refugees released from prisons moved in. Again and again we also hosted new arrivals and refugees passing through.

2014/2015: The number of homeless women and mothers as well as families also increased. The flats became more colourful, more turbulent and had more children.



2016: With the closure of the Balkan corridor, the beginning of the infamous EU-Turkey deal and the establishment of the hotspots, many miserable camps were created overnight on the mainland, but especially particularly vulnerable and needy people could not live under inhuman conditions and were exposed to constant danger. Single mothers and pregnant women, entire families with small children and newborns became residents.

Today we still have people who have no access to any aid by the government, but who urgently need a home and a shelter. Women, mothers and families with refugee status, as well as newly

arrived homeless families with children; people who have been deported from other EU countries and always accompanied by individual refugees in solidarity, who support us over long periods of time and keep the project alive through their participation.

Many of these islands will be required all over Europe in order to counter the process of selection and disenfranchisement with solidarity and hospitality. The Athens flats are only the beginning of a bigger journey. For not one, not two but many welcome islands!

SEE <https://t1p.de/rbqq>

Against the Fear: Counselling in transit

During the escape, on the migration route, in transit as well as in the places of arrival there is a huge need for counselling. There are a lot of questions: Where to find help in this very moment, for immediate help, about the different options to continue the journey, how to arrive safely and finally to struggle successful for a right to stay.

Welcome to Europe tries to provide accurate accessible information for all people on the move and give advice – always with the underlying aim of a common struggle for freedom of movement. At the same time, these talks are often also a moment of sharing. Not seldom, it is needed to speak about incidents where words are missing and wounds are in danger to open again.

Especially in times when people get stuck during these journeys it is more important than ever to be there and to listen, to help to sort and to structure and to point out the few options given. The same goes for the moment of rejection and negative decisions in the asylum procedure. It is important to be still able to figure out all possible options, even if they seem limited, too slow and too hard the struggle. It is advise in respect; it is a dialogue to give strength and endure and overcome the obstacles created by the ruling refugee regime.

Here you find descriptions of two different situations – and links to the bilingual materials we produced.

Information for those stuck in transit in Greece:

Especially in the period when the so-called Balkan Route was officially closed (end of 2015/beginning of 2016) and the EU-Turkey 'Deal' got implemented, many families got stuck in Greece. Many of them were poor and had started their journey with the idea, to find of a relatively open path upon arrival in Greece, that would lead them to the 'North', where most of them had already their relatives and friends residing. They simply did not have the financial means to pay the high prices of an economy of professional flight-help under the harsh conditions that got re-established from then on with a lot of controls at the border from national border guards and Frontex. Especially single parents but also families who finally got separated in their attempts to cross the borders to reach their final destination were desperately searching for possibilities how to come together again. Many of them had to live for months or even years separated from their children, wives or husbands. In March 2017 the re-introduction of inner-european Dublin III deportations back to Greece created an additional obstacle and danger.

For this period of more than three years, with more than 60.000 refugees stuck in Greece, a focus of our work has been advise on the legal ways to reunite with the beloved in other EU-countries through: Relocation (the program has expired now), Family reunification & family reunion, Asylum in Greece. In the

same time, we created information leaflets against the fear, against the Dublin III deportations to Greece.

Info-sheets:

- ➔ Family reunification:
<https://t1p.de/o7wu>
- ➔ Persons holding international protection status from Greece:
<https://t1p.de/tu9w>
- ➔ Fingerprints and the struggle against deportations to Greece:
<https://t1p.de/thrq>

Against the Fear information to stop inner-european Dublin-deportations and deportations to Afghanistan:

Since Germany has regularly carried out collective deportations to Afghanistan, the fear of deportation is huge in the Afghan community. Many are insecure and fear that they could be the next to be deported to Afghanistan. In most cases this fear is unfounded! Contrary to what is often claimed, the chances of Afghan refugees being granted the right to stay in Germany are still not bad. And despite regular collective deportations, only a comparatively small part of the Afghan community is threatened by deportation to Afghanistan. In many cities it has been possible to establish solidarity networks between those affected and supporters and thus largely prevent deportations of Afghans. We therefore propose to join forces and build solidarity. Fear is usually a bad advisor. Sorted information and a look at possible solutions can help to fight for the right to stay for everyone.

Information against the Fear Afghanistan:

<https://t1p.de/1w45>

Dublin III – Against the Fear gives some useful information, which way a deportation from Germany based on the so called Dublin-regulation can be avoided. This is possible in many cases and you have a lot of reasons to be hopeful not to get deported. Find some useful information in 9 languages (Amharic, Arabic, English, Farsi, French, German, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya) in the leaflets on the webguide of Welcome to Europe w2eu.info:

<https://t1p.de/83gg>

In many countries in Europe, like Greece or Italy, recognized refugees cannot find ways to survive and are escaping bad living conditions in the hope to find a better future elsewhere. Others move onwards escaping rejections in order to fight for their right to stay. Afghan refugees from Bavaria in Paris, German speaking Pakistani refugees in Northern Italy, Somali refugees from Norway in Germany. All over Europe people are also escaping Dublin returns and deportations to their country of origin. Some flee from one country to another over years.

In many places, solidarity infrastructures have been created. They are the base and often they offer also the space for deeper talks and counselling in solidarity with all of us who are on the move. More:

<https://t1p.de/wqrl>

Hunger Strikes and Uprisings in closed camps

Documentation and support

Refugees are reacting to the widespread deprivation of their rights with resistance. At nearly all of the refugee detention camps along Europe's external borders, struggles for human rights and for freedom are frequent.

Sometimes individual inmates go on hunger strike; sometimes long cycles of hunger strikes take place involving numerous detainees. Often mattresses or entire cells are set alight, or even whole detention blocks are burned down. Revolts include also self-injuries of detainees who try to be heard inside and outside the prison. They also include the try to escape from prison, which might have one of the implications for both the

guards (who might get suspended) and thus react very aggressively on the escapees in case they are caught.

Many of the detainees who have been involved in protest actions in detention are charged with criminal acts such as "revolting," "civil disorder," "grievous bodily harm against an officer" etc. They are brought to the court without any means to defend themselves and in most cases convicted for a variety of acts ending up in prison for more or less long periods and often with a deportation decision. Those people show courage in an inhuman situation but are punished and disappear in prison were often NGOs and activists lose track of them. Even if



contact is kept it is nearly impossible to offer legal support due to high expenses in felony cases. At this point we want to remind of all those brave detainees who dared to raise their voices and who are in one of the Greek prisons without any support.

Whether or not these actions manage to achieve publicity and these voices are finally heard is crucial in determining how bad the prison staff and police subsequently might mistreat the strikers in order to repress the protest, or whether such protest ultimately prompts a wave of releases or even the closure of a particularly infamous detention camp.

In Greece revolts happen in nearly all detention centers and a lot of police or borderguard stations, but also in the 'hotspots' on the Aegean Islands. Most of the time, they remain unnoticed by the public and repressed by the authorities with mere violence and severe juridical penalties.

We try to break the silence and report on this blog.

Freedom – Azadi – Hurriya!

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/qit8>



From the beginning in 2009 and then especially during the whole period of long-term detention 2012- 2015 reporting on ongoing struggles and revolts inside closed camps and prisons was and is till today a crucial topic for the blog of infomobile. A central part of the work consisted of supplying detainees with charges for their mobile phones and keep regular contact. In hundreds of messages and even letters, people from the 'inside' could so reach the 'outside' and with this a little bit of freedom.

For years this was a shared aim and we worked closely together with Clamdestina from Thessaloniki, who did a similar work and a friendship rose from the very beginning. The two blogs were for many years the only English writing alternative information sources from the movement about the situation of refugees and migrants in Greece.

SEE ALSO THEIR BLOG ➔ <https://t1p.de/rarv>

Bags Mohajer and Boza Tracks – two sister projects

Bags Mohajer:

“Bag Mohajer” is a social project in which young refugees sew bags out of unusable old clothes as well as those rubber dinghies and life jackets, that brought them in a perilous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe. (...)

With Bag Mohajer, we aim to work collectively to create perspectives. We want to create a safe space for those in need of protection, in which we try to make the flight and the thereby caused separations and losses bearable.

The project brings together people with different dreams but similar fates.

We do not want to give up our dreams and therefore we want to spread a piece

of our history through “Bag Mohajer”. We are not allowed to travel but no borders can prevent us from telling our stories.

B.: “Boat bags are made out of the rubber-boats we came with ... It is like an extension of our memory ... the boats did brought’ us here, we are carrying on now...”

* mohajer is the persian/arabic word for refugee, traveler



This project started in early 2010 in the 2008 opened “Villa Azadi – House of Freedom”, one of the few accommodations for unaccompanied refugee minors in Greece. Due to the precarious economic situation of the country, the villa was, however, closed in 2014 and the people living there were left homeless. The Villa Azadi was located in the mountains of the Greek island of Lesbos.

Meanwhile, all former Mohajer tailors arrived in northern Europe and were able to take their first steps into a life in security and dignity. In Greece, the situation for refugees has worsened with the economic crisis. The rapid increase in unemployment in the country hit the undocumented as well as the supporting structures hard. There are hardly any jobs let alone training opportunities for refugees and undocumented migrants.

That’s why we are continuing the project “Bag Mohajer” in Athens.

SEE <http://bagmohajer.antira.info>

P.S.: Bags Mohajer has a very close connection with w2eu. Many of the tailors lived also in the “Welcome Islands” our two solidarity flats in Athens. Many of us are used to collect rubber-boats for the sewing during journeys on the islands. We got used to sort cloth and to carry with us bag-packs and purses as presents whenever we want to make a present... ;)

Boza Tracks

“Boza!”, means “victory” in, the west African language of Fula and has been

used by refugees and migrants as the expression of relief after the successful struggle to cross the border to Europe from Northern Africa.

BOZA TRACKS records songs produced along the migration routes to Europe. The process of the production is taking place on different locations and is a statement in itself: Recording Against Borders.

BOZA means victory and so we want to overcome the negative feelings of transit – with a mix of different voices who create the sound of the struggles for freedom of movement.

Music is a language that everyone understands, you always find people to join in, no matter where and when. It transfers a certain energy that everyone understands, that’s why I find it really important. I play music all the time, but for the refugees it’s a special moment and if we call ourselves ‘Welcome to Europe’ then we can’t sit there and say, “hey, everything is fucked, here are all the laws and this is what you have to do”. OK, this is important information, but who ever says “welcome to Europe” also has to say, “it’s cool that you’re here, lets celebrate.” We have to remain positive, and music is the right tool for that.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL 
<https://t1p.de/963n>

FACEBOOK BOZA TRACKS 
www.facebook.com/bozatracks/

CHRONOLOGY of w2eu: 2009 – 2019



AUGUST 2009 Nobordercamp Lesvos

„Tomorrow when we continue our journey, we will be refugees again. But until the last minute we will be just people here tonight, friends celebrating together. Who would've thought that on this island we wouldn't have to hide in the woods and that we would get the gift of a night of freedom amongst friends!"
(Milad, coming from Afghanistan)

These words speak volumes. They are the words of a young Afghani man on the last night of the Noborder Camp that took place near Mitilini, the capital of the island of Lesvos in summer 2009. The background of his words is set by the impressive events of those days, in particular at the Infopoint which was set up along the harbour right from the start. Within a few days, this self-organised ›Welcome Centre‹ became a central meeting point for (paperless) newcomers and detainees released from "Pagani", the reception prison for refugees. A space to rest, to exchange information and for collective action.

NOBORDERCAMP-ARCHIVE ON ➔
<https://t1p.de/z9py>

It is especially the case of Pagani that demonstrated the strong connection of struggles inside and outside the prison. International press coverage about the detention centre Pagani was considerable during the week. The struggle in-

side the prison reached its peak some weeks after Noborder in October 2009, when the revolts inside the prison were taken to a next level when the cells were burned down. You can never understand a revolt in all of its meanings, but we can be very sure that the connection to the people outside and the knowledge that they were aware of the problems inside and were just as angry, played a very important role in strengthening the protest. The special situation with 500 activists, 1000 prisoners in Pagani and the world watching a video of underage refugees talking about the awful situation inside the prison created a lot of challenges for the authorities on the small island.

During the Noborder Camp a video recording, first published on youtube, made a scandal of the full situation and of the refugee jail at Pagani in the international media. In it, arrested minors document the inhuman custody conditions with a camera, which was smuggled inside during the protests, and demand the immediate release of the inmates. Inside Pagani there were hunger strikes and revolts.

VIDEO IN PAGANI ➔ <https://t1p.de/4n7g>



One young woman summarised her experience: “What I am most thankful for is that I learnt that there is more than one journey. When I left my home, I left for a secure and better life for me and I wanted to help my family. I am no longer under any illusions. I see clearly what Europe looks like and that it is not the secure place I hoped to reach. We are put in awful prisons, and Europe sends armies to fight us at sea. I never learned so much in such a short space of time. It was hard learning it, but I learned even more. In the last few days I have come to understand that I have just started a second journey. In these days we began to see all the others travelling in the same small boats, struggling to survive and to go further. In the last days together with you in this tent here in Mitilini I have glimpsed an idea of how it could be if we travelled all together. Perhaps towards another place that might exist in the future.”

INFOPOINT IN THE HARBOUR OF MITILINI ➔ <https://t1p.de/o27h>

At the Infopoint, noborder activists wanting to confront the border regime politically could come together with those whose journey to Europe was a practical challenge to those borders. Through this process, refugees and activists were able to break through language barriers and organise mutual support as well as collective (political!) action. The kitchen collectives brought food

and noborder activists offered medical assistance, legal advice and practical help for people continuing their journey. Experienced migrants translated and shared what they had learned along the way, those who were more rested helped the exhausted newcomers. New arrivals participated in farewell parades for those embarking on their journey towards Athens. Setting a precedence, an Afghani family fought and won the ability to register without detention! For the Frontex action day, refugees and activists painted a huge multi-language ‘Freedom of Movement’ banner and hung it up at the Infopoint.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/gbg1>

August 2009 – birdsofimmigrants

This blog displays a platform for unaccompanied young refugees on the way to Europe. Some of the posts are written in Greece, others are posted in some Internet-Cafe on the run. This page should be a way for young refugees to display their view on Europe and of course all the experience on their way.

<https://t1p.de/gsgg>



OCTOBER 2009 Closure of Pagani after the last revolt

Our storyline starts in October 2009 on the Greek island Lesbos, at the fence of the infamous detention Pagani. Smog is in the air from the last revolts, which will finally wipe the slate clean from this prison at the external borders of EU. A few weeks before protests from inside and outside against the inhuman conditions have created images, which went around the world. At the fence – still before the release – next steps are in preparation. Everybody wants to go on as all know, that the situation in Greece will not offer a better life. They also know about the curse of the fingerprint, which all of them have been forced to provide and which burned in their bodies

the risk of deportation back to Greece. Here at the fence they discuss with activists from other European countries, who hand over addresses through the wire, which can be contacted after arrival. The idea of w2eu.info is born in this situation, in the smog of the revolts and by the conviction that freedom of movement is the right for everybody.

The idea was already developed during the nobordercamp, but these face to face encounters on the fence in Pagani in October 2009 became the final starting point for the web guide w2eu.info. Initially handed over as slips of paper through the wire, quickly it was clear

that the need of information and mainly of reliable contacts is huge. In 2010 the web guide went online as an attempt to present a transnational quadrilingual guide for freedom of movement, first of all with contacts in all important European countries of destination and mainly including information about the chances to counter the Dublin-deportations to Greece successfully on a legal level. Step by step the website developed further and the network around have grown up to a more and more stabile structure as a backbone for daily struggles.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/qmez>

“The next day we had to make sure that Pagani was empty. Next to a pile of burnt mattresses was a key ring. While I took

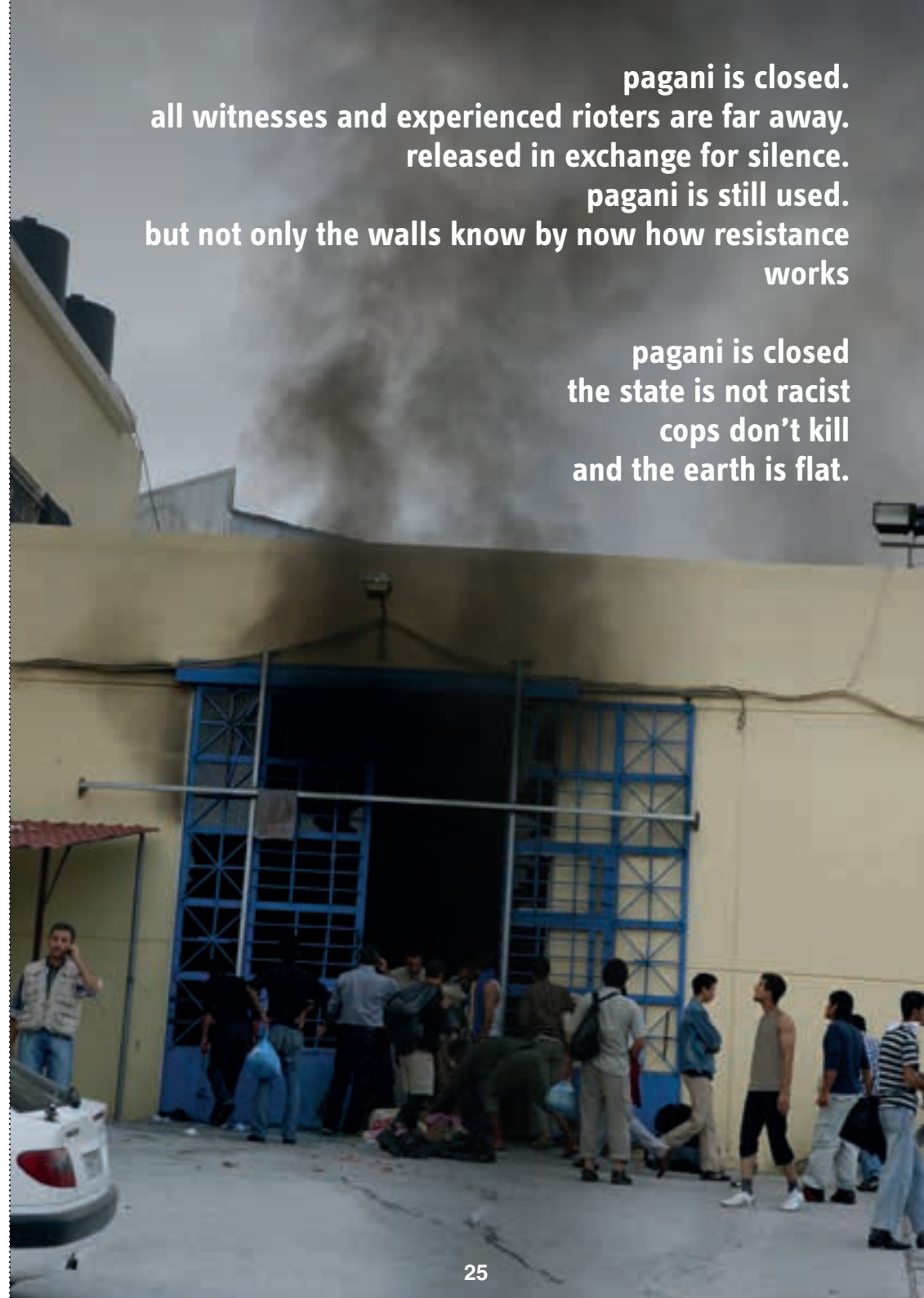
the photo, a uniformed cop sitting in a private car, demanded to know what I was doing with the keys. He claimed the keys were his. I said: we don't need the keys! The people want freedom. The gate was open, the cleaners were inside and so were we. Pieces of cloth were tied up everywhere with prayers, slogans, memories of Noborder. And everywhere the smell of fire in the air. The walls said: they know how revolts work and they are going to pass it on. 3 days later there were people who wanted to listen to the walls again: The only cell that was not totally burnt, with an open door and no staff, was being used by the prefecture as accommodation for new arrivals.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/o27h>



**pagani is closed.
all witnesses and experienced rioters are far away.
released in exchange for silence.
pagani is still used.
but not only the walls know by now how resistance works**

**pagani is closed
the state is not racist
cops don't kill
and the earth is flat.**



MARCH 2010

Webguide w2eu.info and Infomobile-Blog online!

After the noborder camp 2009 a lot of projects developed quickly:

In January 2010 we start to discuss the need of a webguide to collect all the changing information and contacts all over Europe at one platform online so that it could be reachable from whatever point at the journey. Parallel we understood that instead of a fixed infopoint in Mitilini, we need a more flexible infomobile, because the migration route shifted more to the landborder. Within only 2-3 months both projects got realised.

March 2010 – Infomobile Blog goes online

<http://infomobile.w2eu.net/>

The infomobile

... is like a "paper boat". We chose this as a metaphor for what we want to create and for the situation of refugees and



migrants in Greece. The paper boat is a folded boat able to swim – for a while. Then you have to build a new one to go on travelling. A paper boat is symbolic for the journey of life, vulnerable but in your own hands and to be recreated again and again. It is simple, but it carries many hopes and dreams. It can dance on a turbulent sea. It belongs to everybody. And it might become the small version – like a first draft – of a welcome-space.

March 2010 – Webguide goes online

<https://w2eu.info/>

w2eu.info provides contacts and counselling to refugees and migrants on their way – because freedom of movement is everybody's right!



MARCH 2010 Igoumenitsa:

On the bottom side of a truck back to Europe

When we reached after seven hours bus-tour from Athens in Igoumenitsa, it is cold and the darkness of the mountains gives a feeling of isolation. We see that small groups of people disappear in the hills, the wind carries their voices to us. Igoumenitsa is the second biggest ferry-port of Greece and thus also a starting point for all the invisibles, who try to continue their journey to northern Europe. 'Schengendangle' they call it, when they clamp themselves on the bottom side of the trucks, between the tires, to arrive perhaps some day. It is not without risk and we see some people with broken arms and legs. The two prisons in the ferry-port are all the time overcrowded, because the control is strict and every day between 10 and 40 refugees are deported back from Italy. Who was deported might have bad luck. We listen to stories about detention camps at the albanian border, or about refugees, who have been kicked out 100 km away nowhere, and even about clandestine deportations back during the night to Turkey in the region of Evros. After a wave of raids this winter, when many nylon-tents and small belongings were burnt down, most people change the sleeping place every night: from a construction site to the forest and back to the street. Small tents out of nylon-tarps hidden under branches and everyday waiting on a good opportunity: that is the world of the invisibles in Igoumenitsa.

Almost all people here were imprisoned in Greece more than one time

and every second person we meet is a „Dublin-II-case“. Some refugees have been deported back to Greece already several times. J. was deported from Germany in March 2009. He shows us his expulsion order from Greece: 'Since my deportation I was 10 times imprisoned and every time I get another order to leave Greece within 30 days. But where should I go?' S. is coming from Palestine and he is already since six months in Igoumenitsa; 'I forgot to be hungry, I am not thirsty anymore and i



do not know, if I am tired.' He wears a jacket, which is five numbers too big for him, on his three pullovers: 'Everybody gets sick here. We try find food in the garbage cans. Warm water is not existing and nowhere a chance to recharge our mobile phones or to keep contact with my family.' When we started to say good bye, a young Somali turned to us: 'Do not let us alone! Do not let us alone!'

It sounds as if it is not directed to us personally but as a general appeal to the society.

Excerpts of a report by Salinia Stroux and Regina Mantanika, February 2010: "Schengendangle – Undocumented Refugees in the City of Igoumenitsa," <https://t1p.de/3zo4>

JUNE/JULY 2010

Dublin-deportation diary

Athens, July 2010

Athens is the hub of transmigration in Greece, from the islands as well as from the Evros region. Usually Athens is the next station to organize the further jour-

ney. During last years Athens became additionally the hub for Dublin-deportations. From all European countries Dublin-deportees arrive in Athens, where they are imprisoned at the airport in

inhumane conditions. Not a few people turn the loop several times and try to leave Greece again and again. And not a few end up in the streets of Athens, when they lost their hope some day and all options to get money. Many refugees in Athens are caught in a trap, often even a voluntary return is not possible anymore. Massive homelessness of refugees is an increasing problem. The precarious support system from NGOs collapsed in the course of the economical crisis. In summer 2010 the most staff of NGOs was not paid for months and subsequently they stopped their work entirely for some periods. Around the Atiki-square, where in the daytime many Afghan refugees stayed, massive racist attacks happened for several months. The situation of minors in Athens is particularly dramatic: countless young people are exposed – beside all other problems – to sexual assaults in the parks. In

the same time the protests of refugees increase: 2010 several hunger strikes of refugees took place for their recognition and legalization, often sharpened as the strikers stitch up their mouths.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/6m2l>

These descriptions from the squares in Athens summarize the situation in summer 2010. The first report of the Infomobile in Greece was a „Dublin-II-deportation-diary“, a report full with the voices of the Dublin-deportees from Athens. The documentation of individual stories was a crucial method. The documented cases were used as written testimonies to prevent deportations to Greece in front of courts in other countries and also in general to illustrate the situation of Dublin-deportees and to scandalize the inhuman living conditions in the transit countries at the external borders.

AUGUST 2010 First tour of Infomobile Greece: Massgrave in Evros region discovered

On the first tour the Infomobile was searching for the Afghan husband of a woman living in Germany. He went missing at the landborder from Turkey to Greece. We did not find him there, but finally discovered an anonymous mass grave outside the village of Sideró, in inaccessible terrain.

Only a sign, riddled by many gun-shots, tells that this is the cemetery of the illegal immigrants where the corpses are buried. It is not immediately obvious that

it is a mass grave. Upon closer inspection, one can however see holes that were excavated and again filled up by bulldozers and that can contain up to ten corpses.

Further investigation by w2eu, currently in the area to look for the corps of the father of a family who died in the incident on the 25th of June and whose family is currently in relative security shows that this practice has been ongoing for years. It is believed that between



150 and 200 dead have been buried in the mass grave. Although the local government ordered an ablution and burial according to muslim rite, the dead have merely been buried in the mass grave.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/qomr>

We were shocked of what we found out, returned to the village Sidiro to talk to the Mufti, who then had disappeared and didn't go on his phone for the next day, and decided then to make the story public.



This people died trying to enter Europe, fleeing from the situation in their countries. They died because they could not go like you and us with a passport in the hand through the borders, they died because Europe doesn't want them.

The war that is going on in the region of Evros, with the military machinery of greek police and frontex the european border police, has victims. And it is your responsibility that the victims are respected at least after they are dead.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/1c51>

In German language also here:
<https://t1p.de/lwil>
<https://t1p.de/z9cu>



AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2010 Swarming Noborder activities in Samos and Lesbos

These days, Greece is in the headlines because of the crisis: the imminent threat of state bankruptcy, the dictate by IMF and the EU to cut the budget which will drive big parts of the population into poverty, who react with furious protest, general strikes and big demonstrations. It is still hard to say how the situation will develop in the future. It should be obvious though, that this is not solely a Greek crisis. The Euro is stumbling in Greece, and the Europe of Maastricht strikes back.

Last year a noborder camp took place on Lesbos, one of the main arrival islands in the Aegean Sea. The pictures of the totally overcrowded island prison and the deeply inhuman internment practices have not been forgotten. However, the revolts and campaigns that led to the closing of Pagani prison, were just as impressive, and in many refugee

camps in the whole of Europe the stories of 'noborder' is still being told.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/i5dc>

Traces from Lesbos through Europe, Pagani turned into museum:

One year after the Noborder camp in Lesbos we followed the traces of those who started their stay in Europe with a step on the island's soil. They came with small plastic boats, a dangerous trip from Turkey through the Aegean Sea. It was just the first salty step. They came to move further within Europe.

They were on the move to all parts of Europe and one year afterwards they tell their stories:

Of successful arrivals without a fingerprint registered and about their precarious future of forced return. About the trap called Dublin II, when they are to be deported back to Greece – and about successful struggles against this deportation threat. They are narrations about temporary arrangements with more or less precarious jobs in Athens and about the attempts to overcome the Dublin border to Italy twice and more times. And it is always about the next steps towards a right to stay in Europe. As they say: We came to stay!

SOURCE → <http://traces.w2eu.net/>



“...we took our exhibition *Traces from Lesbos through Europe to Pagani* and turned the space where refugees and migrants have been detained and humiliated into a museum – a place that belongs to the past.”

SOURCE → <https://t1p.de/wf97>



The Rescue of Marila and her parents by Stratis the fisherman in Korakas 2009 and the Memorial for the drowned refugees 2010

On 27 October 2009, during the night, a boat with Afghan women, their small children, and minors was about to arrive on Lesbos Island, near the lighthouse of Korakas. But the sea was very rough and the boat turned over and all people fell in the sea.

Only one fishing boat was nearby. The two fishermen Stratis and his father in law, didn't hesitate for a second. Although saving people near to the rocks of Korakas is very dangerous, they immediately went for their rescue. Stratis saw the small baby in the sea as well as his mother and father and jumped himself in the water and pulled the baby out. Then he saved the mother.

Two Afghan mothers, Zakia and Zomaya and their 6 small children could not be rescued. All the young men, among them the son of one of the mothers, managed to save themselves onto the rocks.

They were all brought to Skala Sikaminias port. Baby Marila and her mother where brought to the hospital.

The next day, when we heard about this horrible incident, we went to the hospital to see what the survivors needed. The mother was full of dark bruises on her body. She could not communicate with any doctors and slept next to her baby. Both looked ok, but she told us she didn't know where her husband was.

A few hours later, at the fence of Pagani prison, some people we knew told us about a newcomer, a man who hardly spoke and only said that he nearly drowned and lost his wife and child. I asked them to bring him to the fence and showed him the photos on my camera of the woman and the baby. He did not believe his eyes. It was his family.

So this had happened: instead of bringing the father to hospital and his family, the responsible NGO and the Greek authorities just put him in prison in Pagani. A few hours later, the mistake was cleared up. The man was freed from Pagani prison and could join his family.

The family was then housed in Vila Azadi, the house for minors in the mountain of Agiasos. Here, also the minors who had survived the shipwreck were brought.

The funeral with the son of one of the Afghan women, for his mother and all his small brothers and sisters was the first funeral that took place at the cemetery of Agios Pantaleimonas where the dead had their names written on grave-stones. Before, only words like 'Afghan No 1' or 'Illegal No 2' had marked the graves.

One year later, we asked the family if they wanted to visit the fishermen who saved their lives and we drove together to Skala Sikaminas and had a very



touching encounter. Marila was lying in the arms of her rescuer as if she knew how important this man was for her life.

On the next day, 5 October 2010, and together with the family, Welcome To Europe installed a memorial for the drowned refugees of October 2009 in Lighthouse Korakas. It reads:

LINKS ➔ <https://t1p.de/lhb5>
 ➔ <https://t1p.de/e6wa>

“We mourn the refugees that died during the attempt to overcome Fortress Europe on the 27th of October 2010.

**Yalda 8 * Neda 10 * Mehdi 4 * Zakia
 * Tsimia * Sonia 6 * Abdulfasl 3 * Zomaya**

We thank the brave fishermen for saving the lives”

JANUARY 2011 Deportation stop to Greece

The struggles against deportations back to Greece, Italy, Hungary or Bulgaria are strongly connected with the fights at the external European borders. The struggle against Dublin was significantly fought out along the Balkan route: first until the temporary deportation stop to Greece in the beginning of 2011 and in a second round mainly in Hungary with the break-through by the march of hope in September 2015.

Contested spaces – every centimetre progress tenaciously achieved from a multitude, which stood up individually and collectively to this regulation and still do it until today. Without listening to these manifold stories of resistance it seems to us impossible to understand the political conflict on Dublin. It was and is a social process of erosion and of continuous undermining the border regime, in which the not-granted right

to freedom of movement was asserted. It was and is supported by structures, which exist everywhere in Europe in the meanwhile: an underground railroad for freedom of movement.

In January 2011 the European Court for human rights decided in an individual case, that Greece violated the human rights of a person, who was imprisoned in inhuman conditions and became homeless after his release. This decision also affected Belgium as the deportation to the mentioned conditions in Greece also had violated the human rights there. As a consequence of this decision the deportations to Greece have been suspended in more and more EU-countries as probably hundreds of similar „Greek“ cases might have been decided in the same way. Thus the deportation stop was a court decision of last resort. But this temporary depor-



tation stop, which lasted at least seven years, first of all was the result of the struggles of the refugees themselves and their supporters. After their deportation back to Greece they started again and again to go back to the places they want to stay. They themselves have documented over and over again the unacceptable conditions in Greece and pushed it into the public. Long-term lawsuits in each singular case and mainly the tenacity of the affected persons themselves led to a situation, in which the deportations had to be suspended.

Just now, when we have to develop new strategies to stop again the deportations back to Greece, we should learn from these experiences. Since March 2017 it was announced in the frame of the overall roll back, that Dublin-deportations to Greece will be restarted.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/qmez>
 MORE ALSO HERE ➔ <https://t1p.de/tst6>



JANUARY 2011 300 migrant workers on hunger strike for their rights in Thessaloniki and Athens.

In January 2011, 300 migrant workers went on hunger strike for their rights in Greece. Many activist collectives in Greece supported this hunger strike that ended after 44 days at least partly successful. Welcome to Europe took part in the solidarity by providing online news in english on the hunger strike to raise international awareness.

Announcement by the Assembly of Migrant Hunger Strikers

We are migrant men and women from all over Greece. We came here due to poverty, unemployment, wars and dictatorships. The multinational companies and their political servants did not leave another choice for us than risking 10 times our lives to arrive in Europe's door. The West that is depriving our countries while having much better living conditions is our only chance to live as humans. We came (either with regular entry or not) in Greece and we are working to support ourselves and our families. We live without dignity, in the darkness of illegality in order to benefit employers and state's services from the harsh exploitation of our labor. We live from our sweat and with the dream, some day, to have equal rights with our Greek fellow workers.

During the last period our life has become even more unbearable. As salaries and pensions are cut and everything is getting more expensive, the migrants are presented as those to blame, as those whose fault is the abjection and harsh exploitation of greek workers and



small businessman. The propaganda of fascist and racist parties and groups is nowadays the official state discourse for issues of migration. (...)

The answer to the lies and the cruelty has to be given now and it will come from us, from migrant men and women. We are going in the front line, with our own lives to stop this injustice. **We ask the legalization of all migrant men and women, we ask for equal political and social rights and obligations with greek workers. We ask from our greek fellow workers**, from every person suffering from exploitation to stand next to us. (...)

We don't have another way to make our voices heard, to make you learn about our rights. **Three hundred (300) of us will start a Hunger Strike in Athens and in Thessaloniki, in the 25th of January.** We risk our lives, as, one way or another, this is no life for people with dignity. We prefer to die here rather our children to suffer what we have been through.

January 2011

Assembly of migrant hunger strikers

BLOG IN GREEK ➔ <https://t1p.de/su57w2eu.net> documented the hungerstrike here ➔ <https://t1p.de/76vb>

MAY 2011 Igoumenitsa/Patras

On May 21st the Greek government announced in the TV-channel SKAI their new plans of repression. In a period of massive fascist pogroms in Athens, they react with more police, massive arrests and the construction of 14 new detention and deportation centres. One of them should be close to Igoumenitsa. Additionally, the government said, it was already conducting police raids in Igoumenitsa and further actions would include the eviction of the informal settlements of the sans-papiers in the jungles of Igoumenitsa. There have been around 400 arrests during the last weeks and the police announced to arrest the (as they say) 300 remaining migrants.

Igoumenitsa is the second largest exit-port for migrants from Greece to Italy. Around 500–700 refugees from all war-zones of the world (Sudanese, Eritreans, Afghans, Saharaouis from Morocco, Iraqis, Kurds and Maghrebis) are living under inhuman and degrading conditions in the mountains close to the port, waiting for their chance to leave Greece and find a safe haven in the North – “the real Europe” as they say. There are quite a lot of migrants who stay in Igoumenitsa for many months now. Many of them made it already several times to the Italian ports but were deported before being able to leave the port or apply for asylum. A lot of people have been deported from European countries before due to the Dublin II Regulation.

They are living in small huts without water or electricity or any sanitary infrastructure. Most of the sans-papiers have totally run out of money. They can not afford to buy food. Every night you see people searching for food in the garbage. They are starving from hunger.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/ew15>

Following the huge eviction of the jungles of Igoumenitsa at the 9th of June, Patras became the second war region in the governments cruel fight against the sans-papiers who are trying to leave the country. The government seems to set a clear sign that the ports of exit towards Italy are now a no-go for refugees and migrants. Will the Apartheid ruling Igoumenitsa come to Patras now? It seems so.

“We have no place to stay anymore. We have to sleep at the seaside under the sky. The police is coming everyday to hunt us in order that we leave Patras. (...) One by one we get crazy now. Some of us try to leave Greece back



to Turkey. (...) Now one of my friends got lost in Evros while he was trying to cross the river in the direction of Turkey. We believe he died. In one or two days we will be all crazy!”

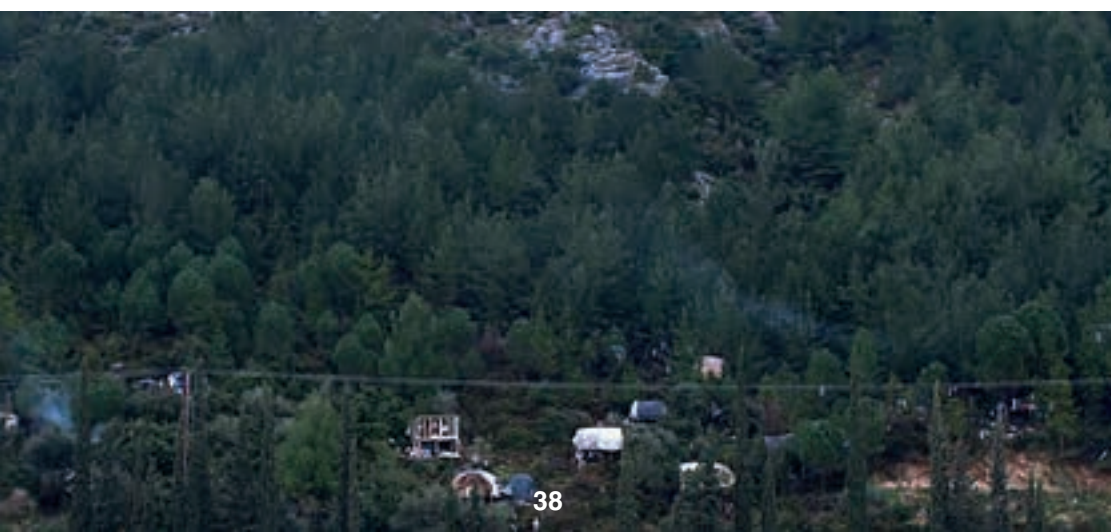
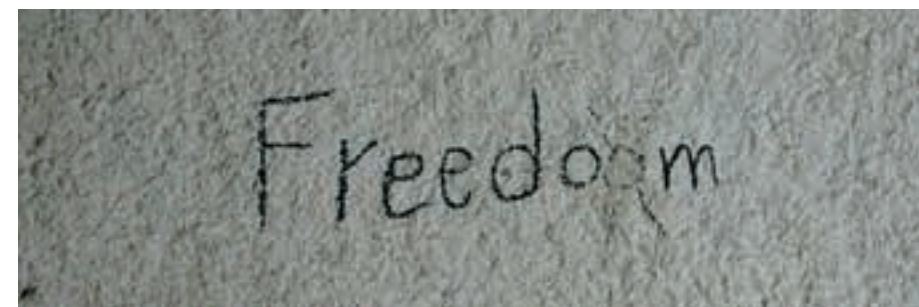
SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/8dmk>

APRIL 2012 “Walls of Shame”

Accounts from the Inside: The Detention Centres of Evros

Obviously, Europe’s main concern is the creation of “walls” in order to hinder or to prevent the access to its territory. Physical walls like the fence, the moat and

border controls in Evros but also invisible walls that are constituted by the lack of protection to those in need, rights denials, systematic detention, detention and living conditions violating human dignity, Readmission Agreements and the Dublin II Regulation. The effects of



these heightening walls have their most tragic face in the many lost and dead at border. This is why we chose to speak about walls of shame in this report report published together with Pro Asyl.

SEE ➞ <https://t1p.de/71bf>

August 2012 – 2015

In the first chapter of this booklet we describe this period that was marked by a lot of contacts from behind walls towards the outside. See page 16–17. Despite Evros region, a main focus was on the contacts into the pre-removal detention centres Amygdaleza, Corinth, Xanthi, Parenesti/ Drama and Komotini.

From August 2012 until 2015 hundreds of refugees were detained merely on administrative grounds for lacking valid residence papers. Following massive police raid by police forces which took place mainly in the urban centres, adults and minors alike got transferred behind the bars. Under degrading detention conditions, their detention duration was being gradually extended again and again – some stayed detained for more than 18 months.

The detainees in the so called pre-removal centres that opened with the initiation of Xenios Dias police raid in beginning of August 2012 have been already psychology broken by getting every three months the information of



their prolonged detention for another 3 or 6 months. The limit of 18 months seemed already so far but at least gave a hope to an end of their imprisonment. Today the shocking information of even more time behind the bars led to uprisings, self-injuries and hunger strikes.

2 April 2014

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/xs4x>

“Hunger strike until freedom”

On November 17th, 2014 hundreds of refugees detained administratively in the pre-removal centre of Amygdaleza started to protest massively against the prolonged detention of more than 18 months, against the detention of dozens of minors and the detention conditions that amongst others recently led to the death of two detainees.

“They coop us up here like sheep and then don’t care anymore about us. (...)”

“There are persons detained 26 months. (...)”

“When we say ‘my stomach hurts’, they’d answer ‘my balls hurt.’”

Only on November 6th the 26-year-old Mohammed Asfak died of the consequences of beating by law enforcement officers in Corinth detention centre during one of the uprisings of migrants there 5-6 months ago. His injuries had not been taken care of adequately. He was only transferred to hospital after a break down. For 15 days he had been begging the police to bring him to the hospital as he had respiratory problems.



When asking for medical aid, police even replied: “Die, we don’t care.” Only some days after this tragic incident, another detainee from Bangladesh died of lacking sufficient medical aid. ...

We will fight until freedom”, an underage refugee declared, who has been registered as adult.

At the same time that refugees and migrants in Amygdaleza protest against inhumane detention conditions, illegal detention periods (according to EU law 18 months are the maximum period of administrative detention of migrants) and the imprisonment of minors, at the same time that two migrants died within only one month due to lacking medical aid, the court case against the 65 migrants detained in Amigdaleza who are charged arbitrarily with different penal categories (revolting, violent attempt to escape, severe physical harm, destruction of property etc.) for an uprising on August 10th, 2013 is ongoing.

SOURCE ➞ <https://t1p.de/ozxm>



Homelessness and solidarity

Attiki Square and Larissis Railway Station since 2010, the abandoned Columbia-factory in 2012, Paidion Areos Park and Victoria Square since 2015 latest... The places are changing, the huge problem of homelessness of refugees in Greece remains. In the last years also more Greeks find themselves sleeping on the streets. The question of 'home' and 'lost homes' has become again central in Greece in the last three years. On the street, in a tent, moving from one couch to another, living in abandoned buildings without access to electricity and running water... Parallel a solidar-

ity infrastructure of housing has been growing in the same period with dozens of refugee squats opening first in Thessaloniki and then in Athens. These today are under a growing threat with already four squats evicted in 2019 under Syriza government and upcoming elections bringing a new right-conservative government.

The majority of refugees is excluded from the right of state provided housing and among these most can be defined as 'homeless' in the wider sense. Having no other opportunity of choice,



them," M. has tears in her eyes. She is alone with her three children. "But I am strong, I will make it!"

SOURCE FROM 2011 ➔
<https://t1p.de/76q5>

Much later, in 2018 we dedicated a small booklet to the stories of some of them:

refugees in their largest number sleep in informal hotels run by co-nationals, thus being exposed to all kinds of exploitation and violence. The number of 'rough sleepers', refugees staying on the streets, in the parks, under the bridges, in barracks or in construction sites, is unknown. They often remain invisible, walking around all through the night to protect themselves from the cold and the dangers of theft, sexual abuse etc. In a case of an Afghan family sleeping outside during 2010, their homelessness ended up in the sexual abuse of their 7 year old child. ... A young African women fell victim to a rapist, who attacked her in the middle of the night while she was sleeping alone on a square in the centre of Athens. A group of unaccompanied minors sleeping under a bridge was attacked by Neonazis with Molotov cocktails.

"I am walking around all the night. I walk through all of Athens. It is too cold to sleep and I am afraid. When I see the sunlight, I look for a safe place to sleep 3-4 hours. I am doing this since one month," tells Ali (15) from Afghanistan.

"I will put my children under the umbrella to sleep and I myself will sit awake all the night. Everything I do, is just for

Ten people who lost what was their home to war, conflict, and other life-threatening conditions...
 Ten people who were forced to escape and who decided to try to search and create another home somewhere else in safety and peace...
 Ten people, who are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children of someone...
 Ten people with talents, professions, passions and dreams...
 Ten people living in Greece for some moments...
 Ten people without a shelter...
 and one person, who lost his home during the economic crisis in Greece.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/0zui>



2014

Anti-Dublin-campaign in Germany

Never before was the resistance against the restrictions of the freedom of movement for refugees and migrants and especially against deportations within Europe so loud and convinced. In Germany and all over Europe, initiatives call for self-organized resistance such as the „Lampedusa Groups“. European borders have never been more contested. Almost every week migrants collectively pass the borders in Ceuta and Melilla, thousands arrive on the shores of Sicily. On Lampedusa, hundreds of people reject their registration and in the Aegean Sea boats arrive daily on the Greek islands.

Time to Act. Dublin has to be abolished!
– Call in June 2014

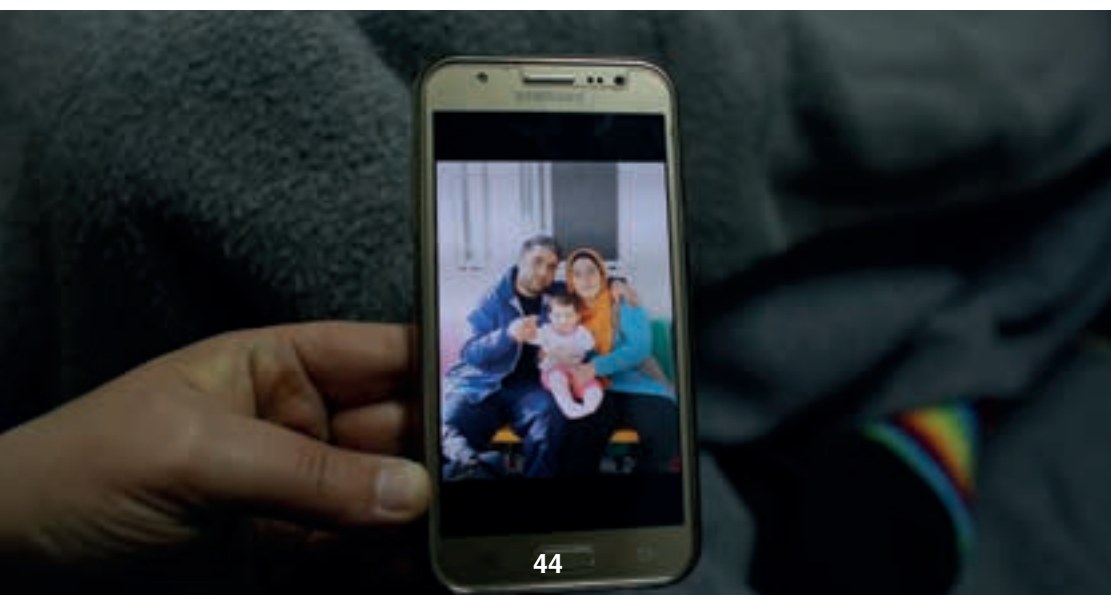
In 2014 when this call was written the campaign to abolish the Dublin-regulation was already a few years old. Latest

with the deportation stop to Greece in 2011 there was an ongoing struggle to tear down the inner-european deportation-system based on the Dublin-regulation. Starting from the idea that scandalising combined with juridical measures in manifold single cases could help to fight for deportation stops to more countries like Italy, Malta, Bulgaria or Hungary, more and more it became clear that this was out of reach. In the same time everywhere self-organised resistance was growing and it would stop with the period in 2015 with the struggles of refugees opening a passage through the balkanroute and in the same time leading to a defacto-stop of Dublin-deportations also to many other countries.

WEBSITE OF THE CAMPAIGN ➔

<https://t1p.de/b37s>

CALL ➔ <https://t1p.de/eyfe>



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

Nobordercamp in Bulgaria

Following the EU eastward expansion, countries like Bulgaria and Romania are progressively cracking down on those that try to cross their borders and rampantly working against freedom of movement. The Bulgarian government's current target date for joining the Schengen agreement is 2012. The border control between Bulgaria and Turkey is cited as the biggest problem Bulgaria is faced with in order for the country to join Schengen. Following the participation of Bulgarian border police in FRONTEX operations along the Greek-Turkish border, there is talk of extending the agency's operations to the border between Bulgaria and Turkey.

These developments, together with the deterioration of the migrants' situation in neighboring Greece, are the two immediate reasons for organizing a No Bor-

der camp at the border between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey in the coming summer.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/8reo>

No one here is illegal:

By the way: The famous song from BOZA tracks "no one here is illegal" was invented on this nobordercamp in Bulgaria: <https://t1p.de/pk4m>



AUGUST 2011 Memorial in Evros

On 30th of August 2011 in Tyhero in the Evros region we came together with activists from the Noborder camp in Bulgaria and John who lost his wife Jane, and Sami who was searching for his friend, to build a fountain as a memorial for the dead and missing at the land border to Turkey. In this time most refugees were arriving along this route, being forced to cross the dangerous river Maritsa. The ones who arrived safely would walk through villages like this one to find the next police station and get registered. The former mine-fields along the border were for many the first step on European territory, for some they were the end of a journey that was meant to lead them to safety:

John lost his wife Jane and Tahera her husband Bashir in the Evros River. They represent hundreds of other migrants who drowned in the water, were killed by landmines or are still missing. Their dead bodies were treated disrespectfully:

In 2010 we discovered a mass grave in Sidero where the corpses could not be identified. We returned to give back a piece of dignity to the dead and also those who survived.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/pk4m>

Lostatborder-report

Shortly afterwards we published a report on the losses at the border:

LOST AT BORDER reports on the reality of loss and death at the Greek borders. As a close friend of ours said once: "If you are a refugee and you die nobody asks any questions. But for living somewhere, everybody is questioning you!" We want to break the silence and ask: What happened with all these people whose traces got lost?

REPORT AS PDF FOR DOWNLOAD ➔ <https://t1p.de/cl0c>



APRIL 2013 Welcome to Europe expresses solidarity with the refugees' protests in Budapest!

Hungary for a long time was known only as place of quick transit. With increasing Dublin deportations many affected refugees could not keep their strength for a second or third attempt and mainly families with children stayed and tried to get organized in Hungary and to struggle for an improvement of their living conditions. From late summer 2012 until early summer 2013 mainly Afghan families went on protests in Budapest and Bicske, supported from the new developed group MigSzoL. But all efforts failed and the most families – even with a residence status – could not find any perspective, rather they were confronted with the eviction from the refugee camp and subsequent homelessness. Against this background they decided collectively to leave and more than 70 refugees together boarded a train at 12.06.2013. All of them had a protection-status in Hungary, so they could be controlled at the border, but with their documents they have been entitled to move through Europe and thus they reached their destination. At the train station in Munich they finally decided for the end city: Karlsruhe. There some of them had relatives and one of them got the information, that a chance might be given. In Karlsruhe they went to the first reception center, put all their Hungarian documents on the table and asked for asylum as in Hungary a live in humanity and dignity was not possible.

We, the refugees previously living in the Bicske Reception Centre (Hungary) decided to leave Hungary and apply for

asylum in Germany. (...) The fact, that approximately 100 of us left Hungary will not change anything in Bicske. The new people who will be granted the refugee status by Hungary will face similar problems. We saw no other choice than staying together and seek a common solution abroad. We have seen that the European rules on asylum are not working, there is no common treatment and care for asylum-seekers and refugees in Europe. We will not accept this system. Our political resistance is movement. We have to do that for our Children.

This declaration was published together with a detailed list of all their attempts in Hungary to change and to improve their situation (in negotiations with immigration offices, camp administration, politicians and UNHCR, and by protest-actions in front of the parliament). It was the first collectively organized leave and the families organized common events also later in Germany. Until today nearly all of them still live in Baden-Württemberg (the federal state, in which Karlsruhe is located).

SEE ➔ <https://t1p.de/30ww>



Welcome to Greece – Information Guide for Refugees and Migrants

In August 2014 a first printed version of the Welcome to Greece guide was produced and it was mainly distributed during the “Journeys back to the border” (see page 8–11). The guide exists in four languages: English, Arabic, Farsi, French. Updated versions followed in July 2015 and again in October 2016. The guide is distributed for free and it can be downloaded on the website w2eu.info for free as well. All solidarity groups and structures were invited to download and to reprint it. Ten thousands of copies have been distributed, mainly in the long summer of migration in 2015.

It was and still is one of the huge gaps in Greece during the ongoing humanitarian crisis concerning the situation of refugees that they don't have the information they need in order to understand their rights, possibilities and obligations in Greece and Europe as well as the situation and place they specifically find themselves in upon arrival. Thus the main aim is to inform the people and to give them as much space as possible to take their own decisions grounded on knowledge of the situation.

The guide is meant to help solving this obstacle letting people know for exam-



ple where they are, what the procedures are, what kind of documents they receive, what the law says, how long they might stay in the place of arrival but also how they can contribute to a conflict-free and peaceful environment of solidarity given the current circumstances of a humanitarian crisis. More than that the contacts inside the booklet help them to find support with NGOs upon arrival in Athens. For example often people leave the island sick, and need further treatment or medication in Athens. Others decide to apply for asylum, family reunification and/or housing and need to know where they can be supported with that.

We witnessed hundreds of refugees sitting or lying in different corners of Lesbos island and reading peacefully the guides. In the port we saw hundreds daily sleeping while the guide was visible in their pockets or bags obviously

kept safely along with their small properties. We strongly believe that providing people with information is their basic right.

In 2015 and 2016 we experienced medial defamation attacks against the distribution of the info guides. We understood it as part of the wider attempt to criminalize the solidarity networks and their support to refugees and migrants. And we understood it as a hint that we need to continue for sure.

We continued to produce and to distribute the info guides and we keep on saying: Welcome to Greece! Equal rights to all! No prisons! No criminalisation of solidarity! Freedom of movement is everybody's right!

2015 ➞ <https://t1p.de/zda7>

2016 ➞ <https://t1p.de/84g0>

2013 – 2018 Memorial in Thermi/Lesvos

12th of October 2013

We came together today. Here in the harbour of Thermi we gathered for remembering the dead people of the European border regime.

In the last years about 20.000 people have been killed by these murderous borders – here in the Aegean, at the street of Gibraltar and many have been lost in the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy. The numbers of deaths at

the European borders have increased tremendously. Since the Lampedusa tragedy with more than 300 dead a few days ago and yesterday another tragedy happened in front of the Italian island. All over Europe there is an outcry: this senseless death at the border has to be stopped! There should be safe ways for refugees to reach Europe!

10 months ago, in December 2012, 27 people have been found dead here in

Thermi. In March 2013 another tragic incident happened at the coast of Lesbos. The father of a one of the drowned is today here with us.

All of these deaths have a face, a name. All of them leave behind relatives and friends. Besides the bodies also their hopes and dreams are lost.

We want to give back a piece of dignity, to those whose death disappeared – right here – into the senselessness of the European borders – and we want to thank those who risk their lives to rescue.

We gathered for giving back a piece of dignity also to those who survived. A piece of dignity that was lost on the

way to Europe, like the passports or the photographs showing the faces of the beloved ones that disappeared in the water.

We all feel ashamed in the moment of these deaths because we failed in our attempt to stop this murderous regime and to create a welcoming Europe.

➔ <https://t1p.de/3qqm>

When we started to remember this year, who we have to mourn for, we realized that we are more and more confronted with death even after people have survived the sea. We had to commemorate today also friend who died last winter in the hot-spot of Moria, because they had been left during winter in terrible conditions. We are in close contacts with families that they waited too long to be reunited with their beloved even if they had the right for family reunification and died before. If you really want to mourn the dead of the Sea, you have to respect also the survivors. The only solution to end their suffering is to create safe passages, to give the people their right to move freely – and for those who are stuck here to finally open the islands. This is why every memorial for us is combined with the promise to tear down the borders that killed them and to create another, a welcoming Europe.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/l8zz>

IN GREEK ➔ <https://t1p.de/yows>

On Friday, 11th of August 2018 some vandals completely destroyed the memorial for the dead at the European borders on Lesbos. It was standing since

October 2013 in Thermi next to the fishermen's club. Reminding the death of people fleeing war and trying to reach safety in Europe. The memorial was set up also to thank the fishermen who risk their lives in saving people in the sea and collecting dead bodies. We went there once a year since then, together with survivors and friends.

We are disgusted by the brutality of those destroying the memorial now for the third time and their missing respect to dead humans and the fishermen.

We will reinstall the names and dates in this place. It is not possible through acts of violence to erase the facts and the memory to the dead.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/gs9x>

Since 2017 Sylvie and Joelle, two strong women and a baby-girl whose name Victoria-Miracle is a symbol for her existence came to commemorate. The two women have survived many hours in the sea when a ship sank on 24 of April 2017 between Turkey and Greece in the North of Lesbos. They tell the story of their survival in a long text.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/pn2t>

On 24 of April 2018 one year had passed since 22 people among them two children lost their lives in the boat accident north of Lesbos. Rescue teams managed many hours later to rescue two women alive, one of them pregnant in the 8th month.

Sylvie and Joelle and the little girl Victoria, born in Mitilini just one month later,



came again to Lesbos to remember this year. Together with the rescue teams of Refugee Rescue / Mo chara and with the activists from Watch the Med Alarm Phone and Welcome to Europe they returned to the place the rescued women and also the dead bodies had been brought one year ago.

Also the spotting teams who still care every night at the beaches to spot boats on the way from the Turkish to the Greek side, Lighthouse relief and The Hope Project, joined the invitation to the three women.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/i5u8>

VIDEO OF THE CEREMONY ➔ <https://t1p.de/k0kw>

OCTOBER 2014

Watch The Med – Alarmphone was found



11th of October 2013: Refugees from a sinking boat called again and again Italian coastguards via satellite phone in order to be rescued, but their SOS signals were not taken seriously. The boat carried more than 400 people and was shot at in the night before by a Libyan vessel. Despite the Italian and soon later the Maltese authorities having been warned of the imminent distress of the passengers, rescue efforts were delayed for several hours and patrol vessels arrived one hour after the boat had sunk. More than 200 people died, only 212 people were saved. What would have happened if the boatpeople could have directed a second call to an independent phone-hotline through which a team of civil society members could raise alarm and put immediate pressure on authorities to rescue?

We can no longer bear to remain helpless as tragedies repeat themselves. We want to do more than condemning these violations after the incidents. We believe that an alternative alarm network established by the civil society on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea could make a difference.

Thus we aim to establish – in close co-operation with the monitoring project Watch The Med – an alternative alarm-phone running 24/7 as of the 10th of October 2014. It will be managed by human rights activists from both sides of the Mediterranean and offer a multi-lingual team.

The left-to-die cases at sea, the human right violations of the EU border agency Frontex and coast guards in all areas of the Mediterranean Sea have to be stopped immediately. We need a civil society network on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea which can enforce political pressure for the lives and the rights of boatpeople, and we want to be part of it.

Such an alternative alarm network would be a first but an urgently required step on the path toward a Euro-Mediterranean area that is not characterised by a deathly border regime but by solidarity and the right for protection and the freedom of movement.

SOURCE ➔

<https://alarmphone.org/en/call/>

In October 2019 the Watch The Med Alarm Phone will turn 5 years old. In the meanwhile it is run by a quite stable network of up to 200 activists from all around the Mediterranean and many other European countries. Within these 5 years the Alarm Phone has been contacted by far more than 2.500 boats, a majority of them in the Aegean Sea, but also in the Central and Western Mediterranean.

Welcome to Europe was one of the founders of the Alarm Phone – and is since then important for the regional expertise and contacts mainly in the

Aegean region. Especially with its long experience in the documentation and scandalization of push-back practices w2eu contributes to the Alarm Phone project. And all people from the boats, which arrive in Greece or Spain and which were in contact with alarm phone via whats app, receive the online-hints to the respective Welcome guides. The Welcome to Italy guide cannot be distributed to arriving or rescued people from the boats as their communication depend to satellite phones. But they might get the info in hot spots, camps or on the streets, where the guide is distributed.

During the long Summer of Migration in 2015/2016

Live-Feed of Welcome to Europe, Moving Europe-Mini-Bus on the Route

In 2015 the EU-border-regime in the Aegean Sea and along the Balkanroute was overrun by the movements of refugees and migrants. Never before the struggle for freedom of movement was so successful and about one million people managed to cross borders by boats, by foot, by buses and trains in never expected dynamics. During August 2015 and March 2016 the situation along the borders changed quickly and partly on a daily level due to the desperate attempts of the governments to stop or to get back control on the route. In these times the w2eu-webguide appeared as too static und thus insufficient to provide quick and updated information.

Thus activists from w2eu in September 2015 participated in the creation of „Moving Europe“, a support and documentation project, which emerged as a joint initiative with bordermonitoring.eu, Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht&Migration and medico international. „To support refugees and migrants struggling at the multiple borders along the Balkanroute, Moving Europe is present with a mobile InfoBus. The aims of the bus are to document the situation on the Balkanroute, to provide independent information for people on the move, and to strengthen political networks along the route. Moving Europe distributes the collected information as printed flyers, and posts regular updates on the w2eu-Livefeed.“ The minibus-crew was permanently active for several months



along different stations of the struggles along the Balkanroute, from Spielfeld in Austria via Belgrade to Idomeni and Thessaloniki. In the same period useful „information for refugees travelling from Greece to Northern Europe“ has been spread all the time through the multi-lingual Live-feed online forum. After the closure of the route and the eviction of

the camp in Idomeni in March and May 2016 the Live-Feed was suspended.

Links:

MOVING EUROPE WEBSITE ➔

<https://t1p.de/uwob>

FILM IN ENGLISH ➔ <https://t1p.de/yyt0>

OCTOBER 2015 Journey to Lesbos during peak of arrivals, heavy rainfalls and the first experiments with the hotspot-system

In October 2015 the situation inside and outside the newly so-called “hot-spot” Moria on Lesbos escalated completely when Frontex slowed down the

registration procedure in a time when still thousands arrived every day and night. In these days the weather conditions worsened and there were heavy

rainfalls. Authorities and NGOs had the offices in a closed section which was difficult to access. Most refugees were sleeping rough inside and outside Moria on the mere dusty floor and lacked even blankets. While Syrians were sheltered in containers and tents, all other nationalities had to queue on the backside of Moria in the olive grove spending sometimes many nights there. Meanwhile, hundreds were blocked in the port and could not depart from the island due to a lack of tickets for the ferries to Athens. UNHCR and NGOs withdraw their stuff as they considered tensions were growing leading to a emergency situation and only activists and volunteers remained. Protest occurred inside and around Moria and in the port.

During these days beginning of October 2015 we spread thousands of Welcome to Greece guides to refugees who were left to survive wherever they would find

a corner to sleep. We spoke with hundreds of people about their experiences, recorded their reports of police violence, racist behaviour and inhuman conditions and answered their questions. We handed out clothes, blankets and tents for those without nothing in the harbour and in / outside of Moria, who were awaiting registration and a ticket to leave the island. We translated for volunteer doctors who came there from various countries to give first aid to people lying in the mud, to pregnant ladies who had miscarriages as they were exposed to the weather and stress, to chronic sick, disabled persons and people with war injuries. We documented police violence and the inhuman conditions in Moria on the infomobile blog and made a statement together with Watch The Med Alarm Phone on how the situation was a self-made crisis because of the implementation of Frontex’ screening policies.



Welcome to Europe and Alarm Phone Statement about the Situation on Lesvos Island / Greece

Refugees who survive the journey and succeed to cross the maritime border between Turkey and Greece in small and overcrowded plastic boats are subjected to the so-called EU 'hotspot approach' since its launch on Friday 16th of October 2015. (...)

Since Frontex has entered the scene, registration processes were dramatically slowed down. Frontex procedures of 'screening' individuals takes a long time which has caused great delays and thus created a situation of humanitarian emergency for the hundreds of people waiting outside. The official opening of this hotspot on Lesvos coincided with increased numbers of new arrivals and deteriorating weather conditions. While it rained non-stop in the past few days, dinghies kept arriving from Turkey. (...)

The scenes in Moria remind us of war-zones: For several miles people are queuing, often for many days. They are exhausted and stand, sit or even lie in the mud, often after just having escaped death when crossing the sea. Highly vulnerable individuals are neither iden-

tified, nor protected, supported or prioritized. There are children, elderly, and pregnant women who are only cared for by activist volunteers and who are made to wait outside by Frontex, and those who drop out of this never-ending queue have to get back to the end of the line. Several women lost their unborn babies due to the stressful circumstances waiting in the line, families got separated in the chaotic situation, children are crying desperately for their parents.

SOURCE → <https://t1p.de/vclx>

October 2015

How Nasimgul survived the waves – Nasimgul spent 18 hours in the rough sea near Lesvos without knowing if she'd survive and having lost track of her small baby girl in August 2014. This is her story.

"That is why we write the story down so that we never forget it. I should never forget this story, I should not believe that I came out from the sea after 18 hours in the waves, not knowing how to swim, on my own."

<https://t1p.de/skp2>



Counselling for refugees stuck in Greece after the closure of the Balkan Corridor and the implementation of the dirty EU-Turkey 'Deal' (2016-2019)

Following the closure of the Balkan-Route on March 2016 thousands of refugees who had been waiting for months in the tents in Idomeni were transferred and dumped in mass tent camps set up over night by the Greek military mainly along the route from Athens to Idomeni and around Thessaloniki. Although authorities promised better conditions than in the jungle of Idomeni or the informal tent camp in Piraeus Port, as well as quick legal transfers to other European countries, most waited for more than two years for a chance to leave, and some are still in Greece along with the newcomers that followed after March 2016.

Until today, the 'hotspots' in the Aegean Islands and the 28 refugee camps in mainland Greece are in the best case inadequate if not shockingly inhuman. The Greek government has not found a way to create a dignified longterm reception system with proper housing in the urban centers for all. Instead around 15.000 refugees are trying to survive on the islands living in open-air prisons,

and around 20.000 live marginalised in ghetto-like camps all around Greece without access to proper legal information or aid.

Greece itself a country hit by many years of economic crisis cannot provide for future prospects even for the recognized refugees and many Greek citizens. Thus, it has remained a transit country, while more than 60.000 refugees live there today. Most of them have relatives waiting for them in other EU-countries and the other half remaining back home in war trying to survive. Meanwhile the EU tries to invest just as much in the improvements of refugees' living conditions and asylum procedures in Greece as needed to re-establish Dublin returns to Greece as announced for 15. March 2017. It is the same infamous mass camps, which refugees are trying to survive now, where Europe seemingly plans to send Dublin return-



ees. A closer look shows the enormous tragedy resulting from this cynical plan to keep refugees stored at Europe's inner borders unsafe, under devastating conditions and far from their relatives.

Over the three years of entrapment in Greece, we have been providing for counselling in the eyes of what we struggle for: freedom of movement. We have focussed on legal pathways to move on such as relocation (which has expired), family reunification and family reunion, rights of beneficiaries of international protection and since March 2017 also on how to protect oneself from being returned back to Greece. In times, where there are much more refugees than lawyers / advisors, where people are held /

kept far from support under conditions that limit even possibilities to have a clear mind, when some hundreds have been stuck in Greece for three years and longer with broken hopes, advice has gained importance more than ever and is our means to express and live solidarity.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/v4w2>

The article on page 14–15 in the beginning of this booklet describes how we tried to do counselling in this transit situation that seemed completely stuck for many people. Especially poor families and even more single parents remained stuck in the camps, impossible to continue their now very expensive journey.



APRIL 2016 City Plaza Hotel opens as a place of resistance and struggle – Solidarity with refugee squats in Athens

Since the morning of 22/4/2016, the abandoned Hotel „City Plaza“ in Athens has been turned into an housing pro-

ject for refugees. Over the years sometimes up to 400 residents in parallel, refugee families from different nationalities together with people of solidarity, were working collectively to organise the space and living side by side. City Plaza became a hub of self-organisation and solidarity and a centre of resistance. A centre of struggle against racism and exclusion, for the right to free movement, decent living conditions and equal rights. Many of the residents continued their journey and live today in various cities in Europe.



Welcome to Europe fell in love with this space of solidarity and struggle and accompanied the process of self-organising from the very beginning.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/9pl5>

Green – blue – white – turquoise – red – yellow – beige – black and red – multicoloured – white and yellow – white and orange – brown – yellow... Many colours; many images. Of approximate-

It is not just a building, but a home defined by its people. From here solidarity is spread like seeds we carry in our small luggage to continue the struggle for equal rights everywhere we'll go.



ly 100 families living today in City Plaza Hotel, 8 are still here from the very first day. Each of them sees in Plaza a different colour but all see a home. More than 1,000 refugees have past through Plaza since it's opening. They said hallo and many said also goodbye. The time spent in City Plaza has left its signs on everyone who passed and on the ones who are still here. These are some fragments of memories, thoughts feelings from some of the people who have stood in solidarity from the very first day and the first residents who are still in Plaza but who we hope to meet again soon elsewhere in the places they dream of and where they wish to go. We wish all people in City Plaza a safe journey!

CITY PLAZA 6-MONTHS-BIRTHDAY-BOOKLET
➔ <https://t1p.de/ja46>

On April 22, 2017 we celebrate together one year of solidarity with our CP-family City Plaza today is everywhere:

In Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Serbia, Sweden ...!

CITY PLAZA HAPPY BIRTHDAY BOOKLET BY W2EU ➔ <https://t1p.de/mlI9>

City Plaza is the biggest among several refugee squats in Athens. Four of the squats got evicted in April 2019, all located in Exarchia area leaving around 200–300 refugees homeless.

While authorities are politically framing the operation as 'a step forward in an anti-drug campaign' in the area, their efforts have hit the ones in need of protection instead and criminalize the refugee squats. Refugee families, many with kids, are left ever since on the streets. They are now not only again unprotected and with empty hands but also (re-)traumatized. Around 60 refugees are protesting since two days at Syndagma Square.

SOURCE ➔ <https://t1p.de/ncn7>



The “Welcome to Italy” guide

The “Welcome to Italy” guide was written and published in its first version in January 2016 in two different versions (A6 and A4) and in 5 languages (Italian, English, French, Arabic and Farsi) and it was distributed for free both in the paper and in the web versions (through w2eu.info website).

In 2016, thanks to some donations to the Welcome to Europe network, it was possible to print 3200 copies of the guide and distribute them to migrants and activists in several Italian cities.

In 2017 the Feltrinelli Group and its association “Il razzismo è una brutta storia” (“Racism is a bad story”) have decided to support the guide and its goals and contents by financing the reprint of the new edition (April 2017) in 20,000 copies in 4 languages (English, French, Arabic and Italian) organizing many presentation events and distributing them inside Feltrinelli bookshops of 17 Italian cities. The guide was also promoted and distributed by the activists of “Carovane Migranti” from Turin who travelled through Italy from 13 to 28 May 2017.

In 2018 the guide was updated and printed (in 8.000 copies) thanks to the contribution of the “Otto per Mille” office of the Italian Waldensian Church. The guide in its new edition has been published in 6 languages (English, French, Arabic, Italian, Farsi and Tigrinya) and has been promoted and distributed since January 2019. In the first six months of 2019 many presentation and distribution events have taken place in many Italian cities and regions together with the promotion of other projects and materials (like the “Alarm Phone” and the leaflet on the new Italian “Security Decree”).

All the presentation and distribution initiatives done since 2016 have been planned and realized thanks to a big network of Italian groups, activists and associations with direct links and cooperation with local groups and projects that support migrants and promote human rights, anti-racism and solidarity. Since the beginning of the “Welcome to Italy” project, many activists from the Welcome to Europe network have been involved (coordinators, editors, translators, reviewers and graphic designers)

in a huge voluntary work that has been really productive and satisfactory. A fundamental contribution to the writing and the update of the guide and for its diffusion and promotion has been given by many groups and activists active in Italy thanks to a network work that has also promoted and increased, since 2016, the development of collaborations among all the people and groups involved.

Why this guide?

The idea of a practical guide for Italy comes first of all from the need and the urgency to produce really useful and “from below” info and materials to be delivered to migrants (and in particular those just arrived in Italy) and the local groups that support them considering both the chronic shortage of information provided to migrants and the scarce usefulness and concreteness of institutional guides already produced (for example the rights are indicated only “on paper” without writing when and how these rights can be violated and what to do in such cases).

For all human beings having the necessary information is the prerequisite to be able to make any choice and therefore be informed in an exhaustive, updated and independent manner is a fundamental right of everyone, a right that they must be able to enjoy from the moment they arrive in Italy and Europe. Compared to the other institutional guides, the objective of this guide is therefore to offer information, updates, advice and useful contacts, always focusing on freedom of choice and free-

dom of movement as cornerstones and it means considering them as active subjects and not passive subjects victims of other people's decisions.

In other words, our goal is to support them starting from what they “would like” to do and not from what they “should” do giving the information and contacts needed to make their choices independently.

These principles need to be protected and affirmed with even greater strength in the light of Italian and European policies against human rights, the increase of racism, discriminations and repressive and security practices but also of dehumanizing approach that makes migrants “spectators” of processes and decisions made by others.

The central and distinctive elements of the guide are, among others: the indication of fundamental rights and an overview of possible violations of these rights, the presence of useful maps and information regarding the places of arrival and transit in Italy, the description of the different types of reception centers, a glossary and an essential phrasebook in Italian and some specific paragraphs and boxes to deepen specific themes or places. An extremely important section inside the guide is the “useful contacts” chapter which includes mainly contacts of grassroots associations, groups, activists and volunteers.

The guide is and will be always available for free in different languages and both in paper and online versions and will be periodically updated according to the changes and news that will happen.

July 2016 in Thessaloniki Conference in the beginning of the noborder camp

When friends from Thessaloniki started to plan for a Noborder camp in July 2016, w2eu-activists took the initiative to propose in its beginning a two-days conference of networking, mainly based on the multiple Balkanroute struggles and experiences. Against the background of a massive roll back a first invitation was spread in April 2016:

During the ‘long summer of migration’ of 2015 and the successful struggles for freedom of movement from the aegean sea via the Balkan up to Scandinavia we contributed with our Balkanroute-network to the chain of solidarity and support along the whole route. Our main aim was to provide useful information for the refugees and migrants and to strengthen their autonomy and self-organisation. But we all could expect already in autumn, that the EU-border-regime would strike back to (re)gain control of migration movement. From the institutionalisation of the corridor to the step by step closure of the Balkan-borders by new militarised fences, from the Nato-operation in the aegean sea through the dirty deal with Turkey for the readmission program: on all levels we could follow the raise of new racist containment and determent policy. Now, end of April 2016, we see desperate conditions of many refugees and migrants in Greece and further on, but we can also follow continuous social and political struggles in the cities, in camps and still at the macedonian border ... Thus we want to propose a two days working meeting in the frame of the No-

border camp with all groups and people, who have been active and connected in the Balkanroute-Networking. The first days of the noborder camp are dedicated to workshops and discussions and we would like to organize several sessions to deepen our exchange and to foster transnational projects ...

The conference was opened by four inputs: “Everything is possible” – the amazing dynamics of 2015; After the EU-Turkey Deal – the new border regime in the Aegean; Back to the Underground railway – new/old challenges of support and solidarity; Between Transit and common social struggles – how to connect the various aspirations and realities? These introductional speeches by activists from various cities and realities have built the base for a series of workshops.

Links:

**NOBORDERCAMP NEWSPAPER
(IN GREEK, ARABIC AND ENGLISH)**

➔ <https://t1p.de/l73q>



OCTOBER 2016

Small journey back to the border:

Outside Moria, October 2016.

100 cars wait in a line, and all sorts of international NGOs work inside the overcrowded “hot-spot.” They keep it running, in close cooperation with EASO, Frontex and the Greek Police.

The prison became its own world, with its own rules, a machinery of separation. In the ‘inside’ of the inside, all those are detained in this closed part of the camp who newly arrived and wait for registration. Latest after 25 days, they will leave to the ‘outside’ of the inside, to the open part of the camp. The unaccompanied minors are detained in an

own section of the prison and longer, for their own ‘protection,’ until a place in a youth accommodation is found for them, sometimes months later. Detained are also all those who are “ready to be deported,” and, in another closed section, those who have in desperation signed the agreement to be “voluntarily returned” to Turkey. In every corner of the camp you feel how the management of this self-created crisis has turned into a huge business. While volunteers are still present, everyone who enters, even the open part of the camp, is registered properly with one of the NGOs. It is forbidden to take pictures. It is forbidden to distribute information. (...) Regularly there are also riots. Twice, Moria was burning already – but there seems to be no response, hardly any signs of solidarity, and so these upheavals end with several arrests.

The harbour of Mytilene, October 2016

Fences surrounding the harbour have destroyed this Aegean point of arrival and farewell. It is not a lively space anymore. Police and Frontex are everywhere. There now are strict controls at the entrance leading to the ferries leaving for mainland Greece. Police vans carry prisoners from the mainland to be deported back to Turkey from here. At the end of our journey back to the border, the friends who joined our travelling group from Athens could not board the ferry to return on Saturday morning. Just as all those who have official registration papers which allow them to travel



inside of Greece, they were denied the right to board the ferry, simply because the checking of their papers had to wait until Monday – and then again to Tuesday.

(...) We wish the residents of Mytilene the strength to resist being eaten out and spat out by the EU's politics of closure and of denial of protection. The wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan have not ended, they keep on raging. Pakistan and Iran are not safe. People from Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to flee from the oppressive regimes.

Somalis run from recruitment by Al Shabab. And so many people have to leave their countries of origin because they cannot survive without the ability to find an income.

As long as this suffering continues to exist all over the world, and is created and reinforced by EU policies of exploitation, we cannot be silent when Europe closes its gates.

For the Freedom of Movement for All!

SOURCE <https://t1p.de/fvg1>

2017/2018 Support for hungerstrikes and protests on family reunification

“Let our families reunite now!”

We, the Syrian families from different camps in Greece (i.e. Elaionas, Koutsochero, Ritsona and Skaramangas), who have our beloved relatives in Germany are inviting all refugees who have also their families there and everybody else who wants to join our struggle and stand in solidarity with us, to a peaceful protest on Thursday August 10th at 11 o'clock in front of the offices of the Greek Asylum Service / Dublin Offices near Katekhaki metro station.

We want to express our strong concern and disagreement about the informal agreement between the German and the Greek government, which led to the practice limiting transfers of persons accepted through family reunification to go to Germany to 70 per month.

There are more and more families who have been accepted to go to Germany more than six months ago.

There are grandparents, fathers, mothers and children waiting to join each other after years of separation.

There are elderly, sick, disabled, newborns, victims of torture and other forms of violence or exploitation as well as many other vulnerable persons among us, who are in urgent need of their families.

There are many of us who wait already since more than 1 ½ years under very difficult conditions in Greece.

We have escaped war.

We need our families and a life in peace.

SOURCE → <https://t1p.de/jfw6>



SUMMER 2018 Welcome2Spain-guide



In summer 2017 in the enclave of Ceuta we decided to finally create a guide for Spain, a country of arrival. We started to collect helpful information for migrants and refugees and to collect old and new support points for a Spanish underground railroad. In 2018 the guide was finished and printed in French, Arabic, English and Spanish.

The timing turned out to be perfect, because in 2018 Spain should become the European external border with the most arrivals.

At the same time, old and new groups and individuals from civil society emerged and reanimated to respond to the state's lack of welcome culture

and to assist people on their arrival in the south or transit in the north of the country, in their asylum procedures, in finding accommodation and information and to support the struggles for freedom of movement.

The Spanish enclave on Moroccan soil Ceuta is one of the first hotspots on the Moroccan-Spanish border.

Travellers usually have to develop strategies before arrival to escape an illegal pushback. Accordingly, the w2Spain guide is already being studied in Morocco by many people in transit who often stay there for months and years against their will.

Travellers arriving in Ceuta or Melilla are confronted with different legislation than when they arrive in mainland Spain, for example in Motril, Cadiz or Almería.

The welcome 2 Spain guide informs about the special features of the different places of arrival as well as about the special possibilities in Spain to get regularization and access to social rights. The guide provides contacts throughout the country for people arriving and has marked special contacts for women, children and young people.

With the emergence of this contact collection, meetings also took place in Sevilla and Barcelona, 7500 printed guides were distributed throughout Spain.

Although the socialist government in Spain also pursues an increasingly militarised and violent policy of isolation and an anti-welcome culture, numerous networks of anti-racism, struggle and solidarity remain stable and grow.

LINK <https://w2eu.info/spain.en.html>

SUMMER 2018

The Idea for a Transnational Summer Camp

During a w2eu-meeting in summer 2018 in Switzerland the proposal was discussed a first time: to invite activists in a very transnational composition for a summer camp in 2019. In the following months several networks have been approached to rediscuss this idea and after a satisfying feedback a first invitation was drafted and send out in September 2018:

...The coming together should offer the respective networks the space to balance their work and to reflect their strategic challenges. But particular importance should be given to cross-over panels and to discuss also in a comprehensive perspective of our various networks. We want to refer to our experiences and to developments from the last 10–20 years of antiracist or no-border struggles. We want to look back to

the historical break through in 2015, of course we have to reflect the following and ongoing roll back since 2016 and we want to open our discourses and practices to the wider social and global context. The struggles for freedom of movement and against the border regime gained more and more importance within last five years and the question ‘In which society we want to live!’ was placed on the agenda with another impact and in a transnational dimension. The transnational summer camp should contribute to rediscuss strategic questions with some more time and – as good as possible – to strengthen a common base for the emancipative struggles of coming years...

In December 2018 the plan was confirmed in another w2eu-meeting in Barcelona and in January 2019 the date

and place for the “Transborder Summer Camp” could be fixed. While firstly we estimated about 300 people to join, in June 2019 already 600 activists from about 100 cities all over Europe and

from Africa registered. An amazing gathering can be expected, the development of “infrastructure for freedom of movement and equal rights” will become a main topic in the agenda.



REFLECTIONS

There are too many different things coming to my mind, while talking...

Athens, May 2019

This is not an interview. It is the attempt to give an insight in reflections two of us shared. One of the two of us came in years ago from Iran via Turkey to Greece and stayed there even when in 2015/2016 nearly everyone left to go North. The other came since 2009 again and again in the other direction. She never had to flee. Both spent several journeys back to the border together. These moments of reflection and sharing are maybe too rare. Maybe too often we

tend to run, sometimes too fast, to cover needs with a lot of energy for all the little gestures of solidarity that might make a change. Sometimes months pass by before we find the time to sit again with time and open mind to share our experiences and reflections. We did that on a warm summer evening in Athens in May 2019, looking back on several years of experience in common struggles and we promised each other to continue during the transborder summercamp a big gathering in France in July.



What do you think is important in our networks, when you look back on the last 5 years? Your own story is special. You remained in Greece, which for most of our friends is a place of transit and not to stay. You stayed for many years, you also stayed when everyone left and you are still there.

For me the most special in our network are the deep friendships. That I know if I go in this city there is someone and I can count on this person. It is like having a backup and that is very important to have. It gives you more freedom. And

this is something very special among us.

I stayed in Athens and in the time when everyone else and also most of my close friends finally left, I felt somehow really left alone here. I was missing these friendships when you understand each other without saying much. I did not find others to replace this. We just share the same way to do things and we have shared so many experiences. That makes it easy to talk. You feel safe to say, whatever comes into your mind.

What did it mean for you to stay here?

In one way I have to say that I found myself here somehow and that is why my place is here. When I think back today, I think, I had always these thoughts of equal rights for everyone, of freedom and all of that. But if you grew up in a society that is under a dictatorship, that influences also a lot the mentality of everyone. So you feel somehow you are part of the oppression and you feel guilty about it. I found myself here in Exarchia in a quarter of Athens that is very political and where it is normal to have the thoughts I had already; it is so normal for example to have other sexual orientations and that there are different ways to do things. It was good to finally know that this is where I am standing.

Recently in Tunis I could listen to a young “Harraga,” one of the young Tunisians who try to leave from there, he held his first speech in a transnational

meeting of activists and he described how he tried and failed to take the boat to Europe. He said it was only after he tried that he started to understand that what he did was his struggle for freedom of movement and that it meant a lot for him to discover this, because from then on his tries made sense in a way and he had found an expression on why he took all this hardship.

Yes, this has a similarity. I think it is something that does not come out of nothing. But when you start to understand yourself as being a radical person in a fight for another society then it means to also discover the sense in what was before. It is not easy to see it like this. It means also to touch all the injustice and the harassments and the problems you have been facing before. But since I discovered this, I can breathe more freely and I can be more who I really am.



You did a lot of invisible work, the daily support of the “welcome island” the flats, a lot of work accompanying people who were in a very difficult situation and also a lot of translations for the webguide of w2eu.info. That means you have a long continuity in these daily struggles.

We don't do these things to be seen or to produce a picture of ourselves. It is fine for me that this is not visible. I have worked in the meantime with a lot of organisations, because I had to earn money as a translator. So, I have seen a lot of other groups pretending to help refugees. A lot of them do it mainly to show themselves and to produce their image. This is what I like in the way we do the things. We don't use it to be seen. We do it in a very normal way, just being us and doing what needs to be done.

But sometimes it is necessary to make this visible, also to make people understand how much these kind of networks live from the daily level and the personal experiences people bring with them and share. Often the things that get public are the speeches held or the actions we do visibly in the outside, the statements we make. But we speak more seldom about all the daily challenges, the immense work it is. It is somehow the backbone of our network and sometimes I even think this has the bigger impact in the end.

I did not look at it from this point of view until now, but I think this is right. Often people come here to Greece, they come to do something for a short period of time and then they leave again. And it is only when you say it now, that I realize how long I am doing this.

Sometimes I think it is still too few people inside the refugee communities who understand about solidarity. There are also different kinds of racism among us. I cannot understand that people flee but still they make a difference between Hazara and Pashto. We are suffering from the same things, but still it is too seldom that there is solidarity. There would be so many people who finally made it to get their right to stay and if they would share more, we could be so many.

But it is often especially people in the communities who have to care a lot for others to follow. Just to care for the own family can demand a lot from you. Plus people have also to struggle with their own experiences of these often hard journeys which took a lot of energy and made them more tired.

There was a period of time, especially when everyone else left, when I felt so empty. To be honest, I think for example in my engagement about the “Welcome Islands”, the flats was maybe not enough. I was sometimes not able to keep promises I had made and to do it as continuously as I wanted. I was still doing, but I was not involved with my complete person. I had the feeling I have to sort myself. It had a lot to do with my own experiences of harassment and hardship during my life until that point of time. I tried a lot to forget my past. It did not work. I had to find a way to overcome this. At some point of time I was able to accept the experiences I made more as a part of my life that gave me also the experience to be who I am now. But that took a lot of energy also to get to that point.



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Photos:

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“I see clearly what Europe looks like and that it is not the secure place I hoped to reach. We are put in awful prisons, and Europe sends armies to fight us at sea. I never learned so much in such a short space of time. In the last few days I have come to understand that I have just started a second journey. In these days we began to see all the others travelling in the same small boats, struggling to survive and to go further. In the last days together with you in this tent here in Mitilini I have glimpsed an idea of how it could be if we travelled all together. Perhaps towards another place that might exist in the future...”

(a woman in the info-tent in Lesvos in August 2009)