



# Campaign to Combat Global Migration Management

*IOM Counter - Bulletin*

## THE GLOBAL MIGRATION REGIME

The 'Ghostbusters' are haunting the world; they are in search for refugees, migrants and other new-time nomads. They carefully distinguish between useful professions, much needed cheap workers and 'surplus people'. Autonomous migration, irregular border crossing, 'sans papiers' and their support networks are declared public enemies. Numerous national and transnational paratroopers and migration agencies are set up to fight them. On the other hand, brain drain of medical staff, IT-experts, as well as manpower-drain of young men and women for construction sites, service work and the sex industry is favoured. For some 15 years a global migration regime is emerging and aims to introduce schemes of 'migration management': No laissez-faire, no autonomy but rational selection of the useful and the unwanted. That corresponds with the global management of finances and trade by GATT, WTO and IMF. Whilst those agencies promote the unlimited flow of goods and money, another set of agencies aim to manage, to control and restrict the free movement of people. These are namely the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration (IGC), and the International Organisation for Labour. The most advanced system has been implemented by the European Union's agencies and task forces, such as the Ad Hoc Group Migration, the Strategic Committee on Migration, and the clearing centres on asylum and on migration. Even a draft for a General Agreement on the Movement of People (GAMP) is discussed in the public domain. Such instruments represent the technology of power and oppression against the free movement of people. It is high time to reveal their true inhuman nature, to bring to public their cruel economic ideologies, to criticise the underlying racism and to promote concerted actions in the name of equality and justice.

## THE IOM, SPIES AND MIGRANT HUNTERS

When the IOM was founded in 1951 it has been intended to create a counter-agency to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The IOM, like the International Organisation for Labour (ILO) reflected the Cold War and Truman doctrine; amongst others it played a role in an early brain drain from the Eastern Bloc to the West and in establishing new pro-capitalist states. Under the leadership of the USA, the IOM, other than the UNHCR has not been based on humanitarian principles but on economical considerations. Their basic policy is not concerned with the well being of people but the well being of economies. Secondly, their ideology is based on racist principles of homogeneous ethnic states and xenophobic concepts of 'home'. That says it all. In an era of globalisation migration appears as a major social movement against the imperialist concept of zones of differentiated reproduction cost. The IOM has been best prepared to implement concepts of enforcing the borders necessary to uphold such a regime and to conform to new forms of neoliberal migration management. *to be continued on page 4 ...*

## Campaign against IOM

*"Migration is a fact, its autonomy could and still cannot be regulated as states and transnational organisations would wish for. Migration is a consequence of economic exploitation, political repression and war, but also of the legitimate interest of people to find better or different living-conditions."*

This is the call to the international border camp, which is taking place in Strasbourg between 19 and 29 July. In proposing an international campaign against the IOM, we argue in favour of the autonomy of migration, and target one of the most important institutions responsible for the implementation of the global migration management regime. This first edition of a newsletter is aimed at exposing the role and function that the IOM has in implementing the dominant and repressive migration politics. At the camp in Strasbourg, we will present the campaign and thereby hope to win more groups to join the campaign in the coming weeks. Under the slogan **"Against Global Migration Management - For Freedom of Movement"**, the European anti-racist 'noborder' network further calls for decentralised international action days between 11 and 13 October. In this context, some groups from different countries are already planning rallies and other actions in front of IOM representations.

We believe that targeting the IOM is the best start in launching a campaign against the international regime of migration control. Not only for political reasons, in which case the IGC or the EU would represent the same importance. But because of their annual meetings, their many offices, their international presence, their widespread net of seismographic stations, the IOM seems the most vulnerable. This is because of their large network of representations which can be targeted but also the crucial role of the IOM's cooperation with other NGO's make it a worthwhile target, with the aim to break this cooperation. One way to do this, is to show that the IOM, in contradiction to the image it portrays to other migrant organisations and humanitarian NGO's, is in fact not a mercenary agency, but acts on behalf of state interests only. Their false image could be efficiently undermined with an image-pollution campaign. We therefore believe that there is a good chance to push back the IOM, at least in those projects, which are heavily and obviously involved in the construction of border controls, or rather, in the construction of an even more repressive border regime.

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## COUNTRY REPORTS

### Turkey – IOM policy kills

The European Union has identified Turkey as a major transit state for migrants from Africa and Asia. In its Iraq Action plan, written by the High Level Working Group Turkey has been targeted for a major intervention to combat unwanted migrants. The IOM went out to study the situation and recommended: 'prevent irregular migration and combat trafficking, ...border control in Turkey is a fundamental tool to fight irregular migration'. Turkish border troops did not hesitate to take the call for fighting literally. 'In course of illegal border crossing nine people have been shot and five more injured. 139 people from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh have attempted to cross the Iranian-Turkish border'. In that, IOM policy recommendations immediately lead to the killing of innocent people. (Tageszeitung, 11.5.2000)

### Ukraine – artificial borders

The Ukraine and its citizens are unfortunate enough to find themselves outside Fortress Europe. Because many people aim to flee destitution international agencies stereotype the Ukraine a 'major sending country', or, in other words a threat to world order. Subsequently, it is the IOM which supports the creation of new border regimes, detention camps, etc. The IOM runs pilot projects to install procedures for border control and detention; they arrange journeys to the US-Mexican border to learn about the use of fences, trenches and high-tech equipment to catch migrants. They ensure that Ukrainian authorities adjust to EU policy requirements and to execute EU will. Not only, that the enforcement of a border regime between Ukraine and Poland contribute to an artificial regime that divides neighbours, friends and colleagues. Equally, the West demands the closure and control towards the East to prevent people transiting the country. Such a policy makes both Ukraine visitors to the West as well as travellers from the East staying in the Ukraine 'illegal immigrants'. In summary, IOM on behalf of the EU promotes a brutal system of exclusion.

### Finland – population exchange.

The IOM's headquarter in Helsinki serves as a centre for all Nordic and Baltic affairs. The Finish government strongly relies on the service of IOM when they try to get rid of refused asylum seekers. In the same time, and that is most cynical, IOM also assists the Ministry of Labour to import workers from Asia. Not only that it looks like a population exchange of unwanted refugees in favour of wanted labour; the questions also is whether this is some kind of state trafficking of women or servants, or what? (IOM annual report for 2000)

## IOM plays vicious waiting game with former Nazi slave workers

Because of her worldwide net of offices the IOM has been chosen a partner organisation for the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future". That is responsible to make compensation available to victims of the Nazi system of slave labour and the so-called "Aryanization" of property. The IOM handles non-Jewish cases in countries where there is no adequate foundation as in France, the Netherlands, Greece, or Italy. The IOM has been chosen despite the fact that they did not have experience with German compensation law. The IOM is accountable to the participating states and the German Foundation. Lowering the number of people who are recognised legitimate to get payments seems to be the only aim of her strategies. Out of 320.000 claims (306.000 for forced labour, 14.000 for property loss), only 75.000 former labourers are supposed to be 'entitled'. Some offices pre-tested claims only to propose several people not to make an application at all because these were deemed unsuccessful. That keeps the number of claims down. Equally, in contrast to other organisations, the IOM does not allow compensating i.e. former slave labourers in the farming industry, or children of deported slave labourers. Statistics show that in comparison with other foundations, the IOM is extremely slow with payments. For example, a Historic Commission of only five staff (!) establishes eligibility of the claims concerning property. Up to now only 16.879 people got paid, whilst i.e. the Polish fund already compensated 305.000 people. All compensation shall be paid in two instalments but because the IOM is so slow most of the ageing applicants will die before the second round. Finally, the well-equipped IOM deals with people who are spread all over the world - not associated in any way - and whose protest is very easy to silent. (see for e.g. [www.compensation-for-forced-labour.org](http://www.compensation-for-forced-labour.org))

## **That makes the IOM the world's largest 'human trafficker'!**

However, the direction is wrong and the people do not volunteer. The list of destinations reads like a list of war torn regions; the major targets were Timor, North Iraq, Kosovo, Angola and Afghanistan. These plus countries like Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Sudan may be understood as those single governments find it too difficult to transport people too. National governments are called 'customers' and the IOM sees their role as a service business for 'voluntary return'.

But 'voluntary' usually means nothing else than either you are detained and deported or you agree in leaving without resistance. That is most obvious with Roma or Kosovars who frequently resisted against such treatment. The IOM contributes to break such resistance, arranges the journey, buys the ticket and away with you. Consequently, the Roma National Congress calls the IOM 'the enemy of the Roma People'.

Any 'mercenary' reputation the IOM might have is a mere cover for their true politics. It is a Janus faced organisation, aiming to win trust, cooperate with and using NGOs on the one hand but acting as a reliable partner of national governments. Be aware!  
(see [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int))

## **IGC – think tank of migration enemies**

The Inter-Governmental Consultation on Asylum, Refugee and Migration is an informal 15-country forum for 'innovative solutions and strategies'. They are based next to the IOM in Geneva; they too have an enforcement instrument, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), again based in Vienna. Since they founding in 1985 they act as a pacemaker in border armament, East-West cooperation and policy making. They role is that of a think tank for key concepts and combat strategies against migrants and they supporters and to promote 'an international machinery' for migration control. Combat terms such as organised 'human trafficking' have possibly been created in their meetings. Their role is difficult to mark, as most of their activities are secret.  
(see [www.icmpd.at](http://www.icmpd.at); [www.igc.ch](http://www.igc.ch))

## **Projects against Women Trafficking - little more for IOM than a justification to fight autonomous migration**

Women-, children-, and human trafficking - no one can deny that scrupulous businessmen force women, who are willing to migrate, into prostitution with false promises. Women's organisations and anti-racist initiatives often support the victims of such violations. In some cases, IOM might also be involved in, or rather financing, projects in support of victims or conducting prevention work. However, the bigger picture tells us that the IOM exploits the theme of women trafficking in a simplified manner, and uses it as a justification for fighting migration as a whole. This seen by the fact that only 0.16 per cent of all of IOM's travel arrangements are in support of victims of trafficking, but also by the way in which the IOM explains the phenomenon of human trafficking as well as the 'solutions' it suggests: According to the IOM's publications, women are always simply poor victims, traffickers on the other hand, are without exception always evil and criminal human traders, and both these circumstances can be fought only through a rigorous fight against illegal migration. The fact that many women in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America, in the light of existing conditions and circumstances, take a conscious decision to take part in migration through arranged marriage, domestic labour schemes and also through prostitution, is ignored by the IOM. They also remain silent about the fact that numerous people, in flight or in migration, take conscious decisions to put themselves in the hands of commercial traffickers, because they have no other chance of entering the 'Fortress' of Europe. And what's more, the IOM spin doctors know why they keep quiet about these facts. They themselves take an active part in destroying refugees' and migrants' flight routes, as, for example, in Turkey or the Ukraine. So the IOM's engagement against women trafficking turns out to be a clever tactic aimed amongst other things to whip up public sentiments against all forms of uncontrolled migration.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MIGRATION REGIME

The EU has built a whole arsenal of anti-migrants and anti-refugee task forces. It all began with Trevi and the Ad Hoc Committee Immigration, and went on with the Schengen agreement to speed up things. Meanwhile, there are the High Level Working Group Asylum and Migration, the Strategic Committee for Migration, Borders and Asylum, the Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on Asylum (CIREA), the Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Borders (CIREFI), the International Border Police Conference and others. EU police and immigration forces are occupying desks in many countries around the world and insists other countries in adjusting to European standards. Most of these agencies act confidential, outside public control, and without any accountability to democratic institutions. A whole set of secret policy making and policing instruments, consisting of bureaucrats, police officers and ministerial staff have been created united in their hostility towards migrants and refugees. Furthermore, bilateral re-admission agreements are forcefully reached through blackmailing third countries by linking development aid, trade agreements or technical support with compliance in migration matters. Correspondingly, think tanks developed a new doctrine of limited sovereignty: 'what is needed is a new kind of imperialism, ... which aims to bring order and organisation' (Foreign Policy Centre, London). Its main starting points are 'terrorism', 'drugs' and 'migration' combined as legitimisation of a New European Aggression and a New Imperialism.

(for detailed critics and EU policy documents see for e.g. [www.statewatch.org.uk](http://www.statewatch.org.uk); [www.materialien.org](http://www.materialien.org))

### Continuation from page 1: THE IOM, SPIES AND MIGRANT HUNTERS

Today, the IOM has 91 member states, its headquarter is in Geneva, where the annual general meetings are held. Its Technical Cooperation Centre (TCC) is based in Vienna and is policing South, Central and East Europe, whilst Polish policy is overlooked from the Berlin office. There are 19 regional sub-offices: the Brussels office covers cooperation with most other West-European governments, only Germany and Italy have their own representations in Bonn and Rome; the Helsinki office works towards the Balticum; and the Budapest office covers southeast Europe. Its over 100 Field Offices and representations act as a 'warning system migration'. They spy on migrants, migrant networks and NGOs. They report back to the EU and US and recommend action. Wherever migration occurs, new border regimes are erected and new technologies introduced under the hospice of the IOM. They recommend migration hostile policies, they sell the latest cry of control technology, they train police officers and border troops to combat migration, they plan and build control posts and detention camps. They pride themselves to have been involved in the movement of 11 million people (sic), in 2000 they facilitated the movement of about 450.000 people, mostly 'return', 'repatriation' or 'resettlement cases'.

#### NEWS-TICKER :

**IOM and Star Alliance - teamwork for profit.** IOM reached special tariff agreements with 80 airlines, usually in the order of a 60 to 70 per cent discount for their bookings, frequently nothing else than covered-up deportation flights. That includes Lufthansa, other Star Alliance businesses, KLM, Air France etc. already targeted for their cooperation in deportation affairs. ([www.deportation-alliance.com](http://www.deportation-alliance.com)) -  
-- **Australia** - IOM erected refugee camp on remote pacific island Nauru to divert Afghan and Iraq asylum seekers. ---  
**France** - In the Sangatte refugee camp near Calais the IOM runs 'information' sessions to refugees aiming to discourage them from England, their chosen destination. ---  
**Macedonia** - Equally, the IOM runs an information campaign aiming to women to smash concepts of migration as a positive life project by arguing that they would necessarily end up in prostitution. ---  
**Germany** - the IOM office in Bonn facilitated the exit of 74.000 people in 2000. --- for more news visit [www.noborder.org/iom](http://www.noborder.org/iom) ---



'noborder' is a European network in which grass root initiatives from numerous countries exchange experiences from antiracist activities, coordinate their campaigns and develop joint projects. Topics have been the deportation.class campaign against airlines, which collaborate in deportations, as well as the noborder camps, interventions against border regimes. The beginning campaign against IOM is situated in this context. ([www.noborder.org](http://www.noborder.org))