

## **Immigration: Mos Maiorum starts, the EU Commission denies involvement**

Today [13 October 2014] marks the start of the EU joint police operation "Mos Maiorum" (the "customs of our ancestors") which will last until 26 October, coordinated by the Viminale [the Italian interior ministry], for the purpose of weakening the capabilities of criminal organisations to facilitate illegal entry into the Union and collect information, for investigation and intelligence purposes. In the meantime the EU Commission has clearly stated that it is a joint police operation, launched by the Italian six-month presidency of the EU Council. The coordinating authority is the Italian interior ministry and the European Commission is not involved in the operation, and nor has community funding been made available. It stressed that Europol is not involved either.

Insofar as Frontex is concerned – it continued – the European border control agency, does not have any role in the planning or execution of this operation, nor does it finance the use of experts or means.

In particular, the executive director of Frontex, Gil Arias, adds: the agency “has been invited by the Italian presidency to provide support to the operation through risk analysis. This means that the agency will only supply the Italian presidency statistics and data analysis concerning migration flows at the European Union’s external borders”. “Mos Maiorum – Arias added – is not a border control operation. Its objectives and execution are of an intra-Schengen and police cooperation nature, which do not fall within the mandate of Frontex”.

Some MEPs, including the former integration minister Cecile Kyenge, have asked for the mission’s procedure to be clarified. Several associations and organisations are also protesting: USB talks of the “registering of migrants [on databases]” , launching the operation “Sos Liberta”, while the Consiglio Italiano dei Rifugiati (Cir, Italian Council for Refugees) complains that Mos Maiorum is the “weapon to abolish Mare nostrum”. The Frontexit campaign, which is supported by numerous organisations, denounced the “persecutory and racist character of the operation”.(ANSA)

[Statewatch translation]