



Frontex's €600 million procurement plan

Tunisia is not a safe country

"Going dark": the next assault on privacy

How to make fences and influence people

And: Tracking the Pact: externalisation and member state comments on new laws; intelligence agency intervention sees conference cancelled in Hamburg; anti-mafia powers for policing environmental crime; prosecuting solidarity in Italy.

€600 million for Frontex procurement in 2023

Frontex has long been the EU's most generously-funded agency, and its spending plans for 2023 demonstrate the vast quantities of money it has at its disposal. The 2023 Procurement Plan, approved by the agency's Management Board in mid-February, outlines almost €600 million of expenditure this year.

What will the money be spent on? The answer does not come as much of a surprise: deportations, surveillance, IT systems and the transportation of border guards and equipment – including weapons and ammunition.

The agency expects to spend some €260 million on IT systems, €40 million on deportation flights (up from €16.5 million in 2020), and at least €180 million on border surveillance kit. Tineke Strik, a Dutch MEP with the Greens in the European Parliament, told *Statewatch* that "strict conditionality" should be applied to the spending, to make sure it doesn't "facilitate violent pushbacks by member states."

Read the full story [here](#).

Tunisia is not a safe country

In late February the Tunisian president Kais Saied ushered in a wave of repression against government critics sub-Saharan Africans, taking up key talking points of the far-right "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory.

Tunisian and international human rights organisations report that critics and political opponents of the government have been arrested, judicial independence has been undermined, and civilians have been subjected to military trials.

At the same time, existing anti-Black racism in Tunisia has been intensified: in Sfax, Sousse and Tunisia, large numbers of people were subjected to violence, forced out of their homes, and denied access to transportation and health services.

For these reasons, we have joined dozens of other organisations to call on EU institutions and member states to withdraw their migration control agreements with Tunisia, and to declare the country neither a safe country of origin nor a place of safety for those rescued at sea.

Read the full statement [here](#).

“Going dark”: the next assault on privacy

For some time, EU and national law enforcement officials have been using the phrase “going dark” as shorthand for their concerns over a lack of access to modern telecommunications technologies.

Now there is a plan in place to gather law enforcement demands on “the balance to be struck between the right to privacy and the right to security,” and influence future legislation to meet those demands.

Of course, “the right to security” is not what these officials claim. In the Charter of Fundamental Rights, “everyone has the right to liberty and security of the person.” The authorities must refrain from arbitrary or unjustified interferences with individual freedom.

The aim is to see this right reinterpreted so as to permit greater state intrusions into privacy, in the name of upholding security. As the Slovakian delegation to the Council put it, “such a terminology can eventually lead to a change in political perception in the European Parliament which will be crucial for any future changes to secondary legislation.”

Read the full report on the plans [here](#) – and if you want to make further coverage possible, please [support our work](#).

How to make fences and influence people: a simple guide

Are you an EU member state looking to divert attention from the human rights abuses you are committing at your border? By following this simple guide, you can ensure that not only will the European Commission, the “Guardian of the Treaties”, turn a blind eye to those abuses, but that you will receive a healthy cash injection at the same time!

There are just four simple steps to follow:

1. Become involved in a “crisis” at your external border
2. Weather the paltry criticism that emerges from the European Commission
3. Watch the money for “migration management” roll in
4. Offer a medal to the relevant European Commissioner

Read the full guide [here](#).

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24 April

[Frontex to spend hundreds of millions of euros on surveillance and deportations](#)

Frontex will spend hundreds of millions of euros on border surveillance and contracts for deportation flights this year, as well as €3 million on storing weapons and ammunition, according to a plan approved by the agency's management board in mid-February.

19 April

["Going dark": will the next assault on privacy take place behind closed doors?](#)

The Swedish Presidency of the Council proposed to create a High-Level Expert group on data retention to strike a new "balance" between the right to privacy and the right to security, according to two documents published by Statewatch. Member state feedback has been enthusiastic. The aim is to change the rhetoric on surveillance to facilitate the adoption of new rules. The expert group format of discussion and the participation of civil society are still to be decided, with the Commission and the Council likely to co-chair.

17 April

[Joint Statement: Tunisia is neither a safe country of origin nor a place of safety for those rescued at sea](#)

We, the undersigned organisations, issue this statement to remind once again that Tunisia is neither a safe country of origin nor a safe third country. Therefore, it cannot be considered as a place of safety for people rescued at sea.

6 April

[EU: Tracking the Pact: Council reports on externalisation efforts in Iraq and Nigeria](#)

Two documents obtained by Statewatch assess the state of implementation of the Migration Action Plans approved by the European Council for Iraq and Nigeria. There is little or no attention or funding devoted to establishing legal migration pathways, with the focus instead on continued externalisation of border controls and deportations.

4 April

[Conference at University of Hamburg cancelled after intelligence agency intervention](#)

Press release published by AStA of the University of Hamburg and Network for an Alternative Quest on 3 April, following the revoking of permission for a conference at the University of Hamburg following the intervention of the Hamburg domestic intelligence agency (Büro für Verfassungsschutz Hamburg).

3 April

[Tracking the Pact: Member state comments on the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation and Asylum Procedure Regulation](#)

Member states are discussing a substantially redrafted version of the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation, and a new compromise version of the Asylum Procedure Regulation.

Analysis

17 April

[The green police: anti-mafia powers for environmental crime investigations?](#)

The European Commission's proposal for a new environmental crime Directive will significantly strengthen law enforcement powers. As well as introducing a range of new criminal offences at EU level, the proposed Directive encourages the use of intrusive policing tactics against suspected environmental crime offenders. Member states, however, aim to water down the Commission's proposal to reduce the obligations on national authorities, and are concerned about what they see as an attempt to 'overharmonise' national criminal laws.

12 April

[Viewpoint: How to make fences and influence people: a simple guide](#)

Are you an EU member state looking to divert attention from the human rights abuses you are committing at your border? By following this simple guide, you can ensure that not only will the European Commission, the "Guardian of the Treaties", turn a blind eye to those abuses, but that you will receive a healthy cash injection at the same time!

5 April

[Prosecuting solidarity: extracts from a new book on the Riace case](#)

A book about the political use of judicial proceedings to curtail a virtuous example of solidarity at work in reception practices in a small southern town in Calabria, Riace, led by its former mayor, Mimmo (Domenico) Lucano. Hearings of the appeal trial in Reggio Calabria are underway, after the first trial in Locri (whose sentence is commented on in these two extracts) found several defendants guilty, imposing lengthy prison terms (over 13 years for Lucano, over 80 years in total for 18 defendants) and financial penalties. The contributions to this book focus on the trial, the sentence, the appeal and the reality of the experience of Riace, including trial monitoring reports by Giovanna Procacci.

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