

Welcome to Europe on Tour

Swarming NoBorder-activities in Greece from 27.8.- 11.9.2010

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 this summer. It should be obvious though, that this is not solely a Greek crisis. The Euro is stumbling in Greece - but it is the Europe of Maastricht which strikes back.

But it is also the Europe of Schengen, the Europe of border regime and migration control, which is active in Greece. After the routes crossing the West Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea, have been largely blocked, Greece has become the main gate to the EU for refugees and migrants, due to its geographical position and uncontrollable sea borders.

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.

Europe is intervening. As if to quickly patch the situation, Frontex, the European border agency is involved in establishing a system of selection and deportation, which is equivalent to European 'standards'. "Screening centres" will be the new name for detention centres in Greece. They target which had been possible despite all the repression and chaos in Greece: freedom of movement, the ability to continue the journey to the countries in the centre of Europe.

The start of the swarming noborder activities will be at Samos (an Aegean island) on 27th and 28th of August. There have been hunger-strikes of detained refugees taking place in Samos' detention centre directed against this new "screening system", which relies on selection and deportation. Frontex has sent "interviewers" into the detention camp, who change the nationalities of refugees to prepare their deportation. In the meantime Turkey sets out Dikili (about 15 miles off Lesbos' island) as migrants' readmission port. It is declared to start operating during July.

Welcome to Europe will continue the journey and travel from Samos to Lesbos: although the numbers of arrivals decreased, Lesbos is still a gateway for refugees. Like last year, we want to turn the island into an island of welcome and invite everybody to join us between the 1st and 10th of September. In our luggage we carry the stories of those who passed through Lesbos last year and arrived in all over Europe. Stories of arrival - and of migrant struggles against the inner european border-regime, managed by the Dublin II agreement that was established to strengthen the inner European deportation machinery based on a fingerprint-system. A Welcome-to-Europe web-guide (see: <http://w2eu.info>) was found to provide information to find ways through this bureaucratic jungle.

On 11th of September the international trade fair takes place in Thessaloniki, an international economic event with a highly political profile. It is where usually, the Greek government presents its economical policies for the coming year. Given the crisis, bigger protests are to be expected.

Due to the crisis there might be a need for flexibility. Last year the hunger strikes in Pagani led to the noborder starting several days early, which came as a surprise and had us change the entire programme. This time, we know that we need to act according to the developments: struggles don't usually follow a programme. We will start our journey and will see what it brings. We invite all those that bring the readiness to act spontaneously.

Welcome to Europe Network

Further information for Samos and Lesvos, but also on other Greek hotspots see: <http://w2eu.net>

Transnational call “No border lasts forever!” about activities against Frontex and European migration regime not only in Greece see: www.noborder.org

The next Nobordercamp will take place in Brussels 25th of September till 3rd of October. Quite a few will continue the journey to Brussels. See: <http://www.noborderbxi.eu.org/>

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