

PRESS RELEASE
BRIDGES
NOT WALLS

More than 100 civil society organisations in Europe and in Africa come together to demand a different European policy on migrations

Just before the European elections, over a hundred European and African NGOs from the network «Bridges Not Walls» are alerting the European election candidates about the dangers of current European migration policies and call for a joint mobilisation on the 16th and 17th of May.

SATURDAY 16 and SUNDAY 17 May 2009

European days for migrants' rights

SHAME ON EUROPE!

Civil society representatives are working together in Europe and in Africa to **place respect for justice, rights and human dignity at the heart of alternative policies for migration and development.**

Migration has always existed and constitutes an **invaluable social, cultural and economic contribution**. The European Union continues, however, to retreat into a repressive, euro-centred and limited vision of migration which is particularly illustrated by the adoption of the Return Directive by the European Parliament and the European Pact on immigration and asylum. Border control and arresting undocumented migrants have become the basis for most of the EU's migration policies. Foreigners are used as a scapegoat to attract votes from the extremist parties and to help forget the failures of economic and social policies. This migration policy is contrary to the values on which the European Union is based: **peace, democracy, solidarity, justice, respect for human rights and freedom of movement.**

MOBILISATION IN EUROPE and IN AFRICA :

IVORY COAST – ONG Jeunesse Active, le Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits de la Jeunesse (MIDJ), Attac-Côte d'Ivoire, Front Uni de la Jeunesse (FUJ) 16–17 May: information and awareness-raising ;

SPAIN, Galice – Foro Inmigracion : petition against the draft Spanish immigration law, **Madrid – organizaciones españolas** : public meeting on May 17 at midday, **Pays Basque - Harresiak Apurtuz** : sit-in at Bilbao on 16 May at 1pm, **Murcia – Sos Racismo** : presentation of the campaign on 17 May at midday ;

FRANCE, Paris – French Signatories of “Bridges, not Walls” : public gathering at Place de Stalingrad in Paris on 17 May from 3 to 5 pm ;

HUNGARY, Budapest - Mahatma Gandhi Egyesület : conference on immigrants rights and sports activities to help promote tolerance and mutual understanding on 17 May ;

ITALY, Gênes – ARCI : “International Conference for an Open and Welcoming Europe” on 23 May ;

LUXEMBOURG, Luxembourg – ASTI : world «buffet » on 17 May, to which the Luxembourg candidates for the European elections are invited ;

MALI, Bamako – Association Malienne des Expulsés : information and awareness-raising on European policy on migration et development ;

MAURITANIA , Nouakchott – AMDH : training workshop for representatives of civil society on the theme of migration on 17 May ;

PORTUGAL, Lisbonne - - Solidariedade Imigrante : circulation of an open letter and different street activities and debates on 17 May.

BRIDGES NOT WALLS !

A network made up of over 300 European and African organisations working together on the theme of migration and development, « Bridges Not Walls! » organised the Citizen Summit on Migrations from 17-18 October 2008 in Paris, where 70 recommendations were elaborated. The network was also present at the World Social Forum in Belém in January 2009 and continues its mobilisation.

The advocacy document for candidates for the European elections:

<http://www.despontspasdesmurs.org/spip.php?rubrique24>

The 70 recommendations « Bridges Not Walls ! » from the Citizen Summit on Migrations:

<http://www.despontspasdesmurs.org/spip.php?rubrique21>

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