

Press release

30.06.2020



Border Violence Monitoring Network

Human rights organisations call on the German government to take a clear position on violence on Croatia's EU borders

On 1st July 2020 Germany will take over the Presidency of the Council of the EU from its predecessor Croatia. On this occasion, an alliance of German and international human rights organisations and activist groups, including the Border Violence Monitoring Network*, Pro Asyl, Seebrücke and many others, challenges the German government's support for Croatia in the face of systematic human rights violations against asylum seekers being carried out at its borders.

The undersigned organisations draw attention to the illegal collective expulsions that have become established as a mode of informal border management in the Balkan region after the so-called closure of the route at the EU external borders. According to reports from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, more than 7000 people seeking protection have been affected in recent years. In 80% of the incidents there are indications of disproportionate use of force amounting to cases of torture by Croatian officials* and 38% of those affected were minors. For thousands of people seeking protection in Western and Central Europe via Greece, the Balkan region represents an intentional dead end by the EU.

The statement reads as follows: "Five years after the "March of Hope" from Budapest, the signatory organisations call on the Federal Government to work during Germany's EU Council Presidency for an end to violence against people seeking protection and the observance of the law, including at the EU's external borders, and to no longer support and tolerate the massive and well-documented human rights violations.

- Those seeking protection in the Western Balkans must not be forgotten. Their right to asylum in the EU must be guaranteed.
- Croatia's border practices that violate human rights must be identified as such by the Federal Government and clearly condemned. Any material support of the Croatian border police by the Federal Government must be stopped.
- The violence must end. As a "mediator" between the institutions, Germany must use its Presidency of the Council to encourage the European Parliament's endeavours and advocate infringement proceedings against Croatia in view of the systematic pushbacks.

You can find the complete statement [here](#). Please contact us if you have any questions:

Chandra Esser
+49173 234 4214
mail@borderviolence.eu

*The Border Violence Monitoring Network is a watchdog network consisting of various NGOs. Since December 2017, the website www.borderviolence.eu has been documenting pushbacks and police violence at the EU's external borders in the Balkans with the aim of showing the system behind the individual cases and exerting pressure on the responsible actors.