



Disenfranchised and humiliated. Migrants at the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Photo exhibition and round table discussion 12 November 2019

MEPs Bettina Vollath, S&D and Dietmar Köster, S&D in cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Brussels

The situation for refugees on the "Balkan route" and in Bosnia-Herzegovina has long been hopeless. Despite so-called border security measures, however, people are making it to Croatia. The majority of them pay a high price for crossing the border: Croatian police officers abuse and rob them and illegally push them back to Bosnia. They are denied the right to an asylum application to which they are entitled.

In the meantime, around 7,000 people are stranded the city of Bihac and the surrounding area. In June this year, the Bosnian authorities escalated the situation in Bihac and forced around 800 men to the former landfill Vučjak ten kilometres outside the city, where they live in unspeakable conditions. According to the UN country team on site, the conditions in Vučjak pose "significant health and safety risks" to the people there.

Journalist Dirk Planert set up a first-aid station on site in June, initially with his own funds and later with donations. On 27 September 2019, the authorities banned him and his volunteers from their activities and fined them. As a result, the comprehensive medical care of the refugees who continue to stay at Vučjak is no longer guaranteed.

The discussion is show point the conditions in the camp Vučjak. In this context, the strategies of the EU with regard to its external borders will be examined and the illegal practice of pushbacks by a EU member state will be addressed. It will be asked what the European Parliament has to demand with regard to humane refugee and migration policies and the situation at the EU's external borders.

An accompanying photo exhibition documents the work of Dirk Planert and the situation in the camp from June 2019 to the end of September 2019.

TIMETABLE

11:00

Press conference

MEPs Bettina Vollath und Dietmar Köster

12:30

Opening of the photo exhibition

Dean Blazevic, photographer

Venue: A5 Balcony

13:00 - 14:30

Round table discussion

Venue: A5G305

Moderation: Marco Funk, FES

Short opening remarks. MEPs Bettina Vollath und Dietmar Köster

Camp at the dump. The situation in Vučjak. Dirk Planert, journalist (15 min.)

The Western Balkans as migration route and the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Vedran Dzihic, Vienna University (10 min.)

Pushbacks at the Croatian-Bosnian border. Simon Campbell, Border Violence Monitoring (10 min.)

Statement of the EU Commission. Alberto Cammarata, DG NEAR (10 min.)

Q&A session (40 min.)