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Humanitarian situation of refugees at EU external borders

Greens/EFA MEPs trip to Croatian border with Bosnia and Herzegovina

This week, **Greens/EFA MEPs Saskia Bricmont, Erik Marquardt and Tineke Strik** have returned from a fact-finding mission to Croatia's border with Bosnia and Herzegovina and to refugee camps where they confirmed reports of violent returns of asylum seekers and migrants from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina. There will be a **plenary debate on Wednesday (12 February)** on the Humanitarian situation of refugees at EU external borders.

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA group Member who was on the fact-finding mission, comments:

"The only people who are insisting that illegal pushbacks are not happening in the EU's largest external land border are the Croatian authorities. The UN agencies, the Croatian Ombudsman, civil society and migrants and asylum seekers we spoke to showed us clear evidence that this is happening. People reported being beaten up by the Croatian police, being forcibly taken back to Bosnia and Herzegovina and given no information or denied access to the asylum system. Nearly 40% of the individuals pushed back are children."

"Contrary to what the Croatian Government and the European Commission say, it is evident that there is no human rights monitoring mechanism. We call on the Croatian authorities to immediately start an independent monitoring, involving the Ombudswoman and civil society organisations, on the situation at the border. The Croatian government must examine all complaints and we urge the Commission to do a thorough investigation into the allegations and take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with European rules and fundamental rights."

"The EU is pushing Croatian authorities to 'protect' their borders and keep asylum seekers and migrants out, without demanding the respect for fundamental rights. It is astonishing that despite the substantiated allegations of violent push backs, EU countries like Germany are applauding Croatia. The EU and its member states must stop turning a blind eye to this humanitarian situation at its borders."

More:

The mission aimed at investigating the reports by civil society organisations and UN agencies highlighting that Croatian police is pushing back people and restricts their right to access international protection in Croatia. Our MEPs met with Croatian authorities, civil society organisations and UN agencies, and visited a reception centre in Croatia and two refugee camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

You can follow the [debate tomorrow afternoon](#) live (from 15.00 on)

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