

Here are reports about some of the seminars on migration issues on the European Social Forum (ESF) in Athens (4.-7.5.06):

ESF seminar:

Freedom of movement versus the European migration regime of camps and externalisation of the borders

Programm:

Slot 1: Official policies in the EU countries to manage migration and struggles against these policies

- general introduction on migration and globalization - Gustave Massiah (CRID)
- detention camps, zones d'attentes and the migreurop map - Caroline Maillary (migreurop, ANAFE)
- situation in Greece (borders and detention camps) - Olga Lafazani (Network for Social and Political Rights)
- situation in Lampedusa and the campaign currently done in Italy - Filippo Miraglia (ARCI)
- situation in the new eastern EU member states - Franck Duevell (PICUM, University of Oxford)
- examples of struggles against camps, detention and deportation in the UK - Greg (noborder London)

Slot 2: Situation outside/around the EU borders, externalisation process and resistance, esp. EU-African cooperation

- short chronology of the EU camp projects and the collaboration with countries of transit and origin concerning migration control as a reaction to movements of migrants - Conni Gunsner (nolager Germany) text in English on www.no-racism.net/article/1655/ and www.fluechtlingsrat-hamburg.de (together with some other texts from the ESF under the date 4.-7.5.06)
- events in Ceuta and Melilla/Morocco, Algerian, Tunesian and Mauretanian situations - Ali El Baz (ATMF - Association des Marocains de France), Simon Pierre (migrant from Ivory Coast, who was in Morocco, now in Portugal) and Saida Barage(?) (lawyer from a women's organisation and Ligue de Droits de l'Homme in Tunisia)
- latest facts and experiences from Libya - Giusto Catania (MEP)
- SIVE and Eurodac systems - Brigitte (?) (APHDA, Andalusia)
- situation in Turkey Gokcè Gunel (HCA/ between Greece and Turkey)
- presentation of ideas for common actions and debate about the WSF Bamako proposals for European/African cooperation

Results:

- There are a lot of contradictions in the actual immigration policies, which we should take into consideration in our strategies.
- The borders are not completely closed, but a selective, murderish migration management is being developed by the EU, in collaboration with new partners in the South and in the East.
- The image of the migrants should be changed: They are no passive victims, but active subjects, and their actions - on the way, at the borders and in Europe, in the everyday life and on the political level - are important factors.
- The actual policies aim at a deepening of inequalities, and we have to fight against this and demand not only freedom of movement, but also equal rights.
- There are different types of camps, but some common tendencies: The new camps are closer to the borders, closed and often a combination of several functions ("reception", identification, isolation, deportation).
- The struggles against camps, deportations and the externalisation of the migration regime have to be connected, and it is necessary that activists in Europe work together with migrants and organisations in countries of transit and origin
- It is necessary to develop contacts to activists in Eastern EU member states, where new camps are built
- Concerning Africa, there are already active groups and proposals for actions in some countries, e.g. Morocco (conference against the EU-Africa-summit in Rabat 30.6./1.7.) and Mali (WSF in Jan. 06 in Bamako, 2007 in Nairobi), while in other countries like Libya and Tunisia it is very difficult to do something.

Unfortunately we were not able to discuss properly about ideas for transnational cooperation because of lack of time. But the proposals from Morocco and Bamako were presented in the assembly on migrations and became part of the proposed common action day on the 7th october 2006, also in the final declaration of the ESF.

Report: Conni Gunsser

ESF seminar:

Social equalization: struggles for social and political rights against social exclusion of migrants and refugees

It became obvious from the seminar that from their early childhood, migrants face social exclusion either as threat or as a living reality. Both as workers (or "sub-proletariats") and as "foreigners", being semi-legal or even totally illegal, migrants face the denial of European states to provide them access even to fundamental civil, social and political rights. We can't tolerate this!

Our struggles for social equalization will be continued including demands for equal rights in education, health system, social insurance and of course for universal suffrage. We estimate that such demands will be crucial in the next period, especially for the young generations of migrants, who are growing up under the conditions of poverty, social exclusion and ghettoization. Last but not least, we find such struggles as a fruitful field for the involvement and the development of common actions amongst migrants' communities, solidarity and antiracist groups, trade unions, community activists, etc.

Report: Dimitrios Chatzkostas

ESF seminar:

What is wrong with the current anti-trafficking politics? A migrants' and labour rights perspective for a new European agenda

Organized by: Frassanito Network, NextGENDERation network, International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

Migrant, feminist and sex workers' rights activists took a critical perspective on the concept of trafficking. Rather than viewing trafficking as a matter of organized crime, violence against women and slavery, we discussed trafficking from the perspective of migration, labour and rights. Sex work was taken out from the free-voluntary framework that often limits productive discussions and approached in terms of sexualised productive labour.

The main demands we articulate are:

1. to get rid of the term trafficking in women when referring to migrant women in the sex industry
2. to stop supporting/developing anti-trafficking policies

This is necessary since the term trafficking penalizes migrant women since it

1. Hides the active participation of women in the migratory projects
2. Reduces women's migration and participation in the sex industry to the idea of (sex) slavery
3. Equates trafficking to organized crime and therefore increases transnational police cooperation, border control and tightening off visa regimes that work against migrants.
4. Criminalizes sex workers

There is urgently a need to think and pay more attention to the commonalities of struggles between sex workers and struggles of migrants. The point of struggle to be developed are:

1. improvement of working conditions in the sex industry without fear of persecution
2. right to change work and not be forced to stay with the same employer
3. right to stay and not be deported

Victims of organized crime. Victims of male violence. Sex-slaves.

These are the terms commonly used to describe migrant women in the EU's sex industry. Trafficking, in contrast to 'voluntary' migration such as smuggling, is defined as an involuntary and non-consensual form of migration geared towards exploitation of migrants' labour whether in sex or some other kind of industry. This conceptualization of trafficking resulted in NGOs and states'

intervention along two main lines: first, establishing of protective schemes for victims of trafficking and second, the tightening of borders and visa regimes to combat organized criminal networks.

We will address critically the ways in which:

- the term 'sexual slavery' feeds into moral panic, hides the link between current transformations of labour relations and restraints imposed upon migrants' (labour) mobility
- § the focus on organized crime hinders an understanding of various different actors and networks involved in organizing migrants' travel and labour. The idea of trafficking an organized crime initiative also consigns women to the position of victims and prevents our seeing them as labour migrants
- § the existing border and visa regime reduce women's, men's and trans-people's autonomous mobility and result in trafficking and smuggling networks becoming an alternative to legally sanctioned systems of migration
- § the anti-trafficking policies lead to anti-prostitution laws, subsume all migrant sex workers under the category of victims and worsen sex-workers' working conditions and rights
- the category of trafficking damages both the migrants' rights movements and the sex workers' movements since it furthers the political isolation of migrants who work in the sex industry both from the other workers of that industry, and from the other migrants

Shifting the terms of analysis of trafficking from violence and organized crime to migration and labour creates new political and interpretative possibilities. Analytically, it provides us with a framework to examine the impact restrictive immigration and labour policies on migrant workers lives and on sex workers' lives. Politically, it avoids the danger of the collusion between feminist and states' anti-immigration agenda, which occurs when victimhood is the main frame of reference, and it proposes a political alliance centered on freedom of movement and resistance against labour exploitation.

Speakers:

Bridget Anderson, Kalayaan, UK

Rutvica Andrijasevic, Frassanito/ NextGENDERation Network

Jelena Djordjevic and Sandra Ljubinkovic, Anti-Trafficking Centre, Serbia

Camille Barbagallo and Giulia Garofalo, International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

Ana Lopes, International Union of Sex Workers

Report: Rutvica Andrijasevic

Summaries given in the assembly on migrations:

ESF-Seminar:

Asylum Right, Denied Right. Criminalization, resettling, externalization. From the protection to the persecution of asylum seekers

Countries are changing asylum laws so that people cannot use them any more. As a consequence, the numbers of asylum seekers decrease.

Immigrants are presented as criminals.

Camps are means to keep migrants outside, also the NGOs and the public are excluded.

We have to think about measures against criminalization and terrorization of asylum seekers and to fight against camps and externalization.

Report: Monica Frechaut

ESF seminar:

Migrant labour and migrant struggles in the process of precariousness

We have to fight against the link between working contract and legal stay and the double regime of precarity = against the working regime and for legalisation. Examples were given of struggles of migrants.

Report: Valery

ESF seminar:

Fighting for legalisation and equal rights

There was a presentation of different realities and struggles: Italy, Spain, Greece, USA. It would be important to exchange all these experiences of migrants (and their supporters) who are fighting for legalisation and to find strategies to deal with the measures of governments and demand instead of their laws an unconditional legalisation for all on the European level.

Report: Olga Lafazani

ESF seminar:

**For a European citizenship of residence and foreign residents voting rights:
Current situation, act and get organized**

Unfortunately I did not take enough notes to give a correct summary.

Report: El Hadj, SOS Racismo, Spain

No reports were given on the following seminars:

Rights and accommodation of isolated young minors

Women, asylum, migration and insertion

Migrations and development: recognising migrants' contributions to destination countries and to the development of countries in the South

The trafficking of human beings: is there coherence amongst policies in Europe in order to fight female trafficking effectively? The role of civil society organizations