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Border surveillance (Eurosur)

Focus must shift to addressing humanitarian concerns

The European Parliament's civil liberties committee today voted on plans for a new border surveillance system (Eurosur), aimed at tightening border controls. The committee endorsed Green proposals to ensure the mandate of Eurosur includes humanitarian concerns but the broad thrust of the proposals remain a cause for concern, with the Greens believing the focus on tighter border controls is counter-productive (1). After the vote, Green migration policy spokesperson **Ska Keller** said:

"MEPs have today voted to give a humanitarian face to the planned EU border surveillance system but the Eurosur proposals remain lop-sided, with their counter-productive focus on closing-off Europe's borders."

"We welcome the support of MEPs for Green proposals to ensure Eurosur is also given a humanitarian mandate. This will mean that Eurosur will have to give protection to migrants and refugees in distress at sea, and have to guarantee the human rights of the boatloads of migrants that risk their lives to leave persecution or destitution. This vote sends an important signal to EU governments that they need to change the focus of Eurosur."

"However, the focus of Eurosur in sealing off Europe's borders, using intrusive new technologies (like drones and satellites) remains. This skewed approach to immigration misses the point. Eurosur has been driven forward by the Commission, certain EU member states and Frontex, with the sole purpose of shutting off EU borders. In addition to information exchange systems, it will use public funds to developing new technologies, like robots and drones to police Europe's external borders."

"Big brother surveillance technology is useless for saving migrants from dying off the cost of Europe. Drones cannot fill the 'vacuum of responsibilities' singled out by the Council of Europe as the core problem for saving migrants in distress at sea. What we need is not more technology but better co-ordination of European border guards."

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Ska Keller

Member

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