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External borders

Court ruling on odious Italy-Libya deal has clear implications for EU migration and border policies

The European Court of Human Rights today ruled that Italy violated the rights of migrants by sending them back to Libya under the terms of a bilateral agreement in 2009. The Greens welcomed the ruling and pointed to the implications it has for new EU proposals on border surveillance and control. Commenting on this, Green migration spokesperson **Ska Keller** said:

"Today's ruling is a belated but necessary rebuke for the odious and inhuman approach of the Italian government to migrant returns. The use of collective returns, via agreement with a third country, with no regard for the basic rights of the affected migrants, is one of the more shameful episodes in recent European immigration policies. However, the ruling should also be a warning for EU-level policy.

"Recent EU proposals on border surveillance (EUROSUR) also foresee agreements with third countries and would imply FRONTEX using high tech surveillance with a view to forcing migrant boats back across the open sea, with all the risks this entails. Today's court ruling has highlighted the conflicts of such an approach with the European Convention on Human Rights, both as regards collective returns and the inhumanity of forcing boats back to third countries.

"Instead of focusing all effort on border controls and migrant returns, with scant regard for human rights, EU member states should instead be addressing the reasons why people are forced to migrate, as well as working on the long overdue need to improve EU asylum and immigration systems."

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