

EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

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RELATIONS

From refugee protection to managed migration: part 2 • **Death at the border – who is to blame?**

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Death at the border – who is to blame?

The EU Border Control Programme, introduced with scant regard to refugee protection and human rights, is leading to an increasing number of deaths on the borders of Europe – and beyond.

The measure of desperation

Over the last eighteen months, our research has identified 742 people who have died attempting to reach Europe.¹ In order to gain entry, the desperate have gambled with their lives. They have attempted to reach Europe by hiding in the wheel-bays of aeroplanes and shipping containers on ferries (see Appendix A); they have trekked overland over hazardous routes (see Appendix B); they have chanced perilous sea-crossings (see Appendix C). The majority of those who died are sub-Saharan Africans, but also included in the grim tally of death are other Africans, Iraqis, Kurds, Afghans, Albanians, eastern Europeans and people from the Indian sub-continent.

The most perilous way to get into Europe is to be smuggled in by sea. In all, 670 people met their deaths while travelling on rickety and overcrowded fishing boats, flimsy rubber dinghies or other sub-standard vessels, which sank, or crashed against the rocks, in rough seas. These people (Appendix C) were attempting to reach Greece from Turkey via the Mediterranean and then the Aegean or Ionian Seas; Italy from Libya or Tunisia via the Mediterranean; the Spanish mainland from Morocco via the 9-mile crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar; the Spanish Canary Islands via the 60-mile sea voyage from the Saharan coast. A few, whose decomposing corpses washed ashore on Europe's southern coasts, were in sight of their final destination. Traffickers, determined to avoid detection, would have forced them overboard; those who could not swim, drowned. Still others died because they lost their way on the high seas; they drifted for days, even weeks, before finally succumbing to hunger, exposure and thirst.

A further fifty people died between May 2002 and June 2003 after attempting to trek across the Turkish/Greek border or cross the frontier that separates Ukraine from Slovakia (Appendix B). The news that their frozen corpses had been discovered, merited just a few lines in the newspapers, as did the fact that four migrants were blown apart after stepping on the landmines which litter the Turkish-Greek border near the river Evros (Merik in Turkish). A group of French tourists ensured that the fact that sixteen sub-Saharan Africans had died of hunger, thirst and exhaustion in the no-man's land between the Moroccan and Mauritanian frontiers was more fully explored, by contacting Radio French International.

'There's a sort of desperation in them. If you haven't seen it, you can't understand.'

Luigi Tenaglia, medical worker in Lampedusa

In addition to those who died after attempting overland and sea routes, twenty-one people, died in the period under review, having attempted entry to Europe as stowaways in air or sea carriers, or on coaches or lorries. Hypothermia, lack of oxygen, carbon monoxide poisoning, suffocation due to the terrible heat in containers packed with fruit, are among the causes of their deaths.

Those who seek to enter Europe clandestinely nearly always do so with the aid of traffickers or smugglers. Aware of the risks, and most often pooling the life savings of families to pay the traffickers' charges, they decide that the circumstances in their country of origin are so bleak that they have no option but to become part of the 'human cargo' smuggled into Europe. That they 'choose' to be dehumanised and commodified in this way, is the most glaring measure of their desperation. But this desperation is not acknowledged by politicians, who respond to the emotionally-charged media-generated hysteria over asylum by demonising the desperate as an 'invading army' of 'illegal immigrants'.

Managed Migration and anti-trafficking initiatives

It was the laws introduced by politicians throughout Europe, North America and Australia from the 1980s onwards that have set the tone for the ill-informed media debate. Intelligent discussion on the reasons for forced migration and refugee flight is curtailed and compassion for the desperate derided. Until the 1980s,

refugee policy was still regarded as a human rights issue. But this changed in the 1990s. As the number of asylum claims rose, immigration control and not human rights began to be prioritised by western governments.² Common visa policies (that denied visas to those coming from refugee-producing countries) and carriers' liability fines (which penalised airlines and sea carriers that brought in those without papers) were introduced; airline liaison officers were installed in refugee-producing countries and readmission treaties negotiated. With the introduction of such barriers, the vast majority of asylum seekers, attempting to reach the EU, turned to human smugglers and trafficking networks. Independent research shows that now most asylum seekers need to engage the assistance of smugglers or traffickers at some point in their journey.³

The detrimental impact of European policies on asylum rights was never acknowledged during the 1990s. Instead, new asylum policies were formulated within a criminological perspective which prioritised the need to combat transnational organised crime over the rights of refugees. In this, the framers of European asylum law were informed by the new strategy of 'global migration management'⁴ which the richer nations of North America, Europe and Australia were fleshing out in supranational bodies and intergovernmental agencies such as the International Centre for Migration Policy and Development and the Budapest Process. In identifying trafficking and smuggling networks as the main obstacle to managed migration, their framework blurred the legal distinctions between trafficking and smuggling. For trafficking, which involves exploitation that goes on after the arrival in the country of destination, such as bonded labour or prostitution, is clearly a facet of international organised crime. But smuggling, which involves an assisted illegal border crossing with no ongoing exploitation, is not – as acknowledged by the drafters of the 1951 Geneva Convention.⁵

Undermining the Geneva Convention

The drafters of the 1951 Geneva Convention, in recognition of the human smuggling networks that had aided Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, had stipulated in Article 31 that those who used illegal methods to enter a country should not be penalised if their purpose in so doing was to seek asylum. Today, Article 31 has been totally undermined by laws which criminalise smuggling. The year 2000 was designated by the EU, the Group of 8 Industrialised Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (which includes Canada and the US) as the year of the Anti-Trafficking Plan. Subsequently, the 2000 UN Convention on Transnational Crime initiated separate trafficking and smuggling protocols. The smuggling protocol makes it an international offence to assist any person in an illegal border crossing, regardless of whether he or she is a refugee in need of protection. It also states that a migrant, who engages the help of smugglers, is not a blameless victim but complicit in the criminal act of illegal migration.

By conflating trafficking networks with smuggling, by treating all those who seek the aid of traffickers or smugglers as complicit in criminal activity, the UN Convention has absolved policy-makers in the richer developed nations of any blame in the mounting toll of deaths at its borders. Blame for the deaths (when they are acknowledged at all) is placed at the door of ruthless trafficking networks, although those who seek the services of smugglers or traffickers are regarded by the UN as complicit in their own victimisation.

What is not being acknowledged, is the way that immigration and asylum policies of North Africa, Australia and Europe have, since the early 1990s, created the market for traffickers and smugglers to flourish.

The death funnel

Each time smugglers or traffickers seek to exploit a new route, the EU attempts to seal it off. But EU policies do not work. They do not deter people from coming. People just choose more circuitous and hazardous routes. EU policy is, quite literally, funnelling people to their deaths.

In the 1980s, for instance, sub-Saharan Africans would trek across the Sahara, heading for Morocco and then on to the Spanish North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Spain, aided by the EU, responded with a £24.5 million programme designed to make the crossing from Morocco to Spanish territory

In the [Lampedusa] town cemetery, beside the opulent crypts that many southern Italians favour, is a weed-strewn plot of dirt for the bodies of immigrants, buried under wooden crosses with numbers, not names.⁶

'impassable'. But still the desperate come, only today they come to Ceuta in the boots of cars, or togged out in scuba diving suits tied to a life-raft and dragged along the coast by Moroccan swimmers; or they clamber down into the narrow pipes and drains that carry waste into the Bomba gully, the natural frontier between Spain and Morocco. But more often than not, the displaced and desperate seek to enter mainland Spain through the Strait of Gibraltar, or from the Saharan coast to the Canary Islands, across the Mediterranean Sea. But with the introduction of the Surveillance System for the Strait (now extended from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Canaries), and with the permanent military presence in the eastern Mediterranean, the desperate are being forced to take other routes, from Libya and Tunisia to Italy via the Mediterranean, for instance. And the death toll rises – only now the 'nautical graveyards' are increasingly in African territorial waters ensuring that the problem is hidden even further from the European gaze.

Our next report will look at how NGOs and human rights activists are overcoming official indifference and exposing EU and governmental culpability in these deaths.

References

1 Our statistics, gleaned from newspaper accounts, press releases of NGOs, the noborder network and UNITED for Intercultural Action, are certainly a gross under-estimation, as we only include officially-verified deaths. Despite the fact that the EU has a common asylum and immigration policy, no EU body takes responsibility for monitoring these deaths; nor do member states collate statistics in any meaningful fashion. As our figures include all those known to have died attempting to reach Europe, we also include deaths in African and Turkish waters, and on the African mainland.

2 See John Morrison, 'Refugees: "The dark side of globalisation": the criminalisation of refugees' in *Race & Class* (Vol. 43, no.1, July-September 2001).

3 See John Morrison, *The Smuggling and Trafficking of Refugees: the endgame in European asylum policy* (UNHCR, 2000); Sharone Backers, 'Risking it all: the implications of refugee smuggling' in *Race & Class* (Vol. 43, no. 1, July-September 2001); Professor Roger Zetter et al, *An assessment of the Impact of asylum policies in Europe 1990-2000*, Home Office Research Study 259, 2003.

4 See Liz Fekete 'The emergence of xeno-racism' in *Race & Class* (Vol. 43, no. 2, October-December 2001).

5 John Morrison, *Refugees: the dark side of globalisation*, op.cit.

6 *New York Times*, 11.7.03.

Return at the frontier, interception at sea

Update on the EU's Border Control Programme

In *European Race Bulletin* 43, we outlined the different facets of the EU's Border Control Programme. In the three months since we reported, and with the advent of the Italian presidency of the EU in July, the militarisation of borders has intensified. The spirit of the 1951 Geneva Convention, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the right to asylum, are being undermined.

The militarisation of coastal borders is set to intensify under the Italian presidency. Berlusconi has declared immigration a priority and will fast-track European Commission proposals to co-ordinate activities of immigration officers from EU nations operating in the Mediterranean – principally Italy, Spain and Greece.¹

INTERCEPTION AT SEA

Italy

Italy had already introduced legislation which granted the navy special powers to stop and search vessels suspected of involvement in people-trafficking. But the so-called Bossi-Fini immigration law (2002) has now been supplemented by the 'anti-landings decree' of June 2003. This extends the presence of the Italian navy in international waters and grants special powers to the police to send back boats before they enter Italian waters 'if the vessels seem seaworthy and if the passengers on board are not genuine asylum seekers'. The decree came after a huge increase in landings (and capsizings) at the holiday resort of Lampedusa (in a group of islands that form the southernmost outpost of Italian territory 70 miles from the nearest point in Africa).

EU

In focusing on the Mediterranean area, the EU is homing in on the crisis situation in much of sub-Saharan Africa and the increasing movement of the persecuted, the desperate and displaced. But it is Britain, Italy and Spain which are at the forefront of moves to respond to this crisis by restricting refugee rights through policies that lead to the interception of asylum seekers at sea before they reach European territorial waters. The British hard-line approach relates to both its post-September 11 counter-terrorism strategy and its need to appease the tabloid press on the asylum issue. In Spain, the centre-Right government faces additional pressure from its own constituency to introduce a Spanish 'anti-landings law'. In October 2002, Domingo González Arroya, president of the Popular Party on the island of Fuerteventura (and also mayor of La Oliva) called on the Popular Party to back the use of the navy to 'force the small boats arriving on the island to turn back, while ensuring all humanitarian guarantees'. Arroya compared the invasion by sea, to the invasion of the Western Sahara (then a province of Spain) by Moroccan forces. His views were backed by the president of the Canary Islands Popular Party (also mayor of Las Palmas), José Manuel Soria, who implied that the idea was not extreme as it was one that was originally proposed by the British prime minister Tony Blair. In January 2003, the Canaries Congress parliamentary spokesman, José Carlos Mauricio said that an 'integral sea service' should turn back small boats that had set out from the West African coast, as any boat that passed the mid-point between the African coast and the Canaries should be the responsibility of the Moroccan authorities.²

Following in Australia's footsteps

Britain, Spain and Italy want to push the EU towards the Australian model of discriminatory treatment towards refugees who arrive on its shores by boat.³ The Australian approach has been considered the most draconian and punitive policy- clearly running against the spirit of the Geneva Convention which obliges states not to return refugees to countries of persecution. The Italian anti-landings decree is remarkably similar to Australia's Border Protection Validation and Enforcement Powers Act (2001) which allows the authorities to use reasonable force to board vessels, to tow them back out to sea, or to detain people onboard and remove them elsewhere. But whereas, following the Tampa incident, Australia introduced the 'Pacific solution' and attempted to out-source its asylum determining process to places such as Christmas Island or Narau or Papua New Guinea, the EU has managed to keep the process in-house. Italy, backed by Britain, has reached an agreement with Cyprus (which joins the EU in 2004 and is situated less than 40 miles from the shores of Turkey, Syria and the Lebanon). Under the agreement, Cyprus will build a detention centre on the island to house migrants caught at sea 'until they are sent back to their home countries'. This will be backed up by a Maritime Control Centre for the south-east Mediterranean, also based in Cyprus, and joint navy patrols by Italy and Cyprus of the eastern Mediterranean. Britain, Spain and Italy are working on a plan to establish a similar centre in Malta.

The increasing military presence in the eastern Mediterranean and the clamour for new laws to allow for interception at sea, are accompanied by a dehumanising debate about 'boat people' who are described as an 'invading army' against whom appropriate military action should be taken. Politicians, like the Northern League's Umberto Bossi, who is a senior minister in Berlusconi's government, have set the tone for this debate. On 16.6.03, Bossi gave an interview in the *Corriere della Sera* in which he said, 'There are two ways to apply the law [to combat illegal immigration] approved a year ago. Either our ships will tackle the illegal migrants' vessels and take on board only the women and children, or else we write down in black and white that force will be used, and that is the way I want it. After the second or third warning, boom ... the cannon roars. The cannon that blows everyone out of the water. Otherwise the business will never end.'

Bossi's diatribe constituted an instigation to commit crimes against the 'boat people' and to deny them the most basic of human rights, the right to life. Yet his comments were simply brushed aside by fellow cabinet ministers. Justice minister Roberto Castelli said illegal migrants were a 'defenceless army, but no less dangerous for it'. While defence minister Antonio Martino was forced to issue a statement declaring that the Italian navy would not use force on the boats, he also commented that 'in politics, a little noise never does any harm'.

The militarised Mediterranean

Just as the Australian Border Protection Act led to a permanent naval blockade in Australia's territorial waters, the eastern Mediterranean now has a permanent presence of military vessels. Not only do ships from Spain, Britain, (apart from Royal Navy patrol boats, an RAF plane has been provided to scour the seas for boats), France, Italy and Portugal patrol the Mediterranean but, as part of post-September 11 anti-terrorist initiatives, NATO is also conducting Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean (now to be extended to the Strait of Gibraltar). NATO's presence is ostensibly to 'monitor ships which could assist terrorist actions'. However, at a press conference in June, the commander of the allied forces in southern Europe, Admiral Gregory Johnson, boasted that NATO operations had led to a drop in illegal immigration.⁴

The Baltic Sea regional task force is also launching various operations against illegal immigration in 2003. Though this is spearheaded by Latvia, the German border guard are also involved.⁵

CO-OPTION OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The Italian presidency will also step up pressure on the European Council to push out 'integrated border management' policies into non-EU countries. The basis for this had already been formulated at an EU level by the creation of a 'Circle of Friends' or EU 'neighbours' which are defined as Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus; the 'Western Newly Independent States (WNIS)' of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo; and the 'Southern Mediterranean' states of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. Official EU documents invite those who live in close proximity to Europeans to be part of 'a friendly neighbourhood' of 'peace and security'. However, the sub-text is that a good neighbour is one that does the EU's bidding 'on justice and security issues' including illegal migration and other 'threats to stability'.⁶

In *European Race Bulletin* 43, we focused on the co-option of Turkey and Morocco into the EU's 'integrated border management' policies. But, since then, Libya has emerged as the central focus of EU policy. Again, this ties in with the EU's desire to clamp down on the trafficking and smuggling networks attempting to secure a passage into Europe for sub-Saharan Africans.

Libya

Italian ministers have identified Libya as 'the weak point of the Mediterranean'. Statistics have been cited by a parliamentary committee on information and security to suggest that over two million people are waiting on the coast of Libya to catch boats to Italy.⁷ Italy has responded by calling on the EU to lift the arms and trade embargoes on Libya. In April, EU foreign ministers met to discuss a plan to partially lift restrictive measures regarding military equipment, so as to allow for the provision, to the Libyan authorities, of equipment (such as ships) to be used in the fight against illegal immigration. However, at the same time, Italy's belligerent approach to its former colony is threatening to alienate the government of Colonel Gaddafi. On 26 June, Berlusconi informed the Senate that he was close to reaching an agreement with Libya, which would allow Italian soldiers to control Libyan ports and borders, as well as ships to patrol Libyan territorial waters. This was too much for Libya's minister of foreign affairs, who dismissed Berlusconi's 'proposal' as a threat to Libya's constitution and sovereignty and 'not even worthy of discussion'. Nevertheless, Italy and Libya have issued a statement clarifying the joint efforts they are currently undertaking in the field of illegal immigration. This includes ratification of a plan to combat the networks that smuggle illegal immigrants into Italy through Libya and joint operations to rescue boats in cases of accidents. Italy will provide Libya with assistance to finance controls aimed at stopping immigration from north and sub-Saharan Africa.

Morocco

Morocco, concerned about migratory movement from Algeria and encouraged by the promise of economic aid from the EU, has passed a law which imposes stiff sentences on those found guilty of trafficking.⁸ In

March, Spain began negotiations with Morocco for the return of 'illegal immigrants from third countries' who reach Spain by boat from Morocco. The agreement is aimed at sending back an estimated 8,000 sub-Saharan Africans who reach Andalucía or the Canary Islands each year. They are included within the terms of a 1992 repatriation accord which the Spanish government accuses the Moroccan authorities of systematically failing to uphold. In theory, the Africans will be returned, at the cost of the Spanish government, to their own countries. As Spain does not have any treaties with such countries, the reality is that Africans will be sent back via the southern Moroccan borders, but only if the Spanish authorities can prove that the boats the Africans arrive in have Moroccan skippers. The Spanish authorities are extremely unhappy about the lack of progress in negotiations with Morocco. The immigration minister has issued statistics to suggest that of 2,740 sub-Saharan boat people intercepted in the first few months of 2003, Morocco has not readmitted a single one despite the fact that 72 of the 74 traffickers and owners of pateras apprehended by the authorities were Moroccans.⁹

Guinea-Bissau

In December, Spain signed a readmission agreement with Guinea-Bissau, allowing for the expulsion of 'illegal immigrants'.¹⁰

Police Smuggling Disruption Programmes

The EU is keen to back such negotiations with similar liaison with the police and intelligence services of non-EU countries so as to disrupt trafficking and smuggling networks. One such operation was carried out by Interpol, European police and Lebanese internal security services to disrupt the smuggling of Kurds by boat to Cyprus, Greece and Italy.¹¹ These kinds of operations are carried out in a highly secretive manner. And the lack of any judicial scrutiny, makes it highly difficult for anyone to ensure their legality.

In Australia, similar programmes are now mired in controversy, following independent investigations into the deaths, in October 2001 of 353 people, mostly Iraqis, and including 146 children, who drowned when a tiny fishing boat sank in the Indian Ocean.¹² It has since emerged that the Australian Federal Police and Immigration Department had set up a People Smuggling Disruption Programme which was working with Indonesian police and intelligence services. There is compelling evidence that the Indonesian authorities were involved in setting up phoney voyages, sabotaged to fail through engine breakdown or sinking, in order to deter the desperate from seeking the services of smugglers.

The question is whether the EU will follow in Australia's footsteps and set up such controversial smuggling disruption programmes. Already, the general secretary of Interpol, speaking at a conference of its European members, called for new measures to combat trafficking such as the greater use of undercover agents and rewards for informants.¹³

RETURN AT THE FRONTIER

Interception at sea is accompanied by a parallel trend at land frontiers where pressure mounts to intercept and return refugees before they reach the EU. Morocco, for instance, is being induced to intercept asylum seekers before they reach Europe and return them to sub-Saharan Africa. A statement put out by the Moroccan armed forces in January 2003 was clearly aimed at an EU audience. It stated that in 2002 a total of 2,533 irregular migrants were apprehended and prevented from continuing their journey to Europe. Furthermore, the Moroccan authorities intercepted and searched fifteen vessels, which were found to be carrying a total of 545 irregular migrants.

In other cases, the frontier of return is even closer to hand. In Spain, interior ministry statistics for 2002 reveals that a total of 74,467 foreigners were either forcibly expelled, repatriated or denied entry at the border. Spain has also stepped up its fortification of its North African enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila. Here, government delegates have unchecked powers in relation to devolución (a form of immediate repatriation), as noted with concern by AI. It is also noted that Greece has returned Iraqi Kurds to Turkey on the grounds that they entered the country illegally. Both Poland and Lithuania have also returned Chechen refugees seeking asylum at their frontiers.

The case of Chechen refugees

In fact, Chechen refugees, under immediate threat of a humanitarian catastrophe, are one of the refugee groups most at risk from the EU's land border policies.¹⁴ Following the Russian invasion of Chechnya in

1999, an estimated 200,000 refugees fled to the neighbouring states of Ingushetia and Georgia. In Ingushetia, many languish in overcrowded camps with inadequate shelter and sanitation. Others, live in equally harsh conditions in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge. Russia, claiming that stability has returned to Chechnya, is now looking for the forcible return of these refugees, and its officials have even entered refugee camps in Ingushetia to put pressure on the refugees to return. In such circumstances, Chechen refugees may once again be forced to flee. Already, the UNHCR has drawn attention to the fact that the Lithuanian and Polish authorities are breaching the Geneva Convention by operating a system of 'blanket refusal of asylum seekers from Chechnya', following the Moscow theatre siege. Since October 2002, according to Polish charities, there have been dozens of cases of Chechens being turned away at the eastern border. In November 2002, the Lithuanian Border Protection Service expelled seventeen Chechens, including eight children and six women, who had entered the country on foot via Belarus. The State Border Protection Service fears that the number of Chechens attempting to enter Lithuania may increase if fighting in Chechnya continues.¹⁵

But hostility towards Chechen refugees is not confined to the accession states. AI has criticised Sweden for its policy of denying asylum to all Russian applicants, and failing to acknowledge that Chechnyans live in fear of persecution. Immigration minister Jan O Karlsson says that almost all applicants from Russia and the former Soviet Republics have absolutely no ground for seeking asylum. Because the authorities only collect statistics on asylum applications by nationality and not ethnicity, they ignore the plight of Chechnyans seeking asylum from Russia. Furthermore, the Swedish authorities' increasing claim that it is safe for Chechens to be returned to Chechnya, despite well-documented human rights abuses and disappearances there.

References

1 *Independent* 1.7.03.

2 *El País* 25.10.02, *Periódico digital de Canarias* <www.Atlanticocanarias.com> 17.1.03.

3 In fact, it was the American government which first intercepted refugees at sea, when the US coastguard turned back boats of Haitian asylum seekers. The Supreme Court upheld that action in 1993, although international lawyers and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees condemned it as a violation of the obligation to ensure that refugees are not returned to persecution.

4 *EFE* 19.6.03.

5 Agence France Presse 10.4.03.

6 *Statewatch*, vol. 13, no. 2, March-April 2003.

7 Agence France Press 11.4.03, *Observer* 22.6.03.

8 *La Provincia* 3.4.03.

9 *Migration News Sheet*, May 2003, *El País* (English language version) 18.2.03, *Diario de Sevilla digital* <www.diari-odesevilla.com> 10.3.03.

10 *Migration News Sheet*, January 2003.

11 *Kathimerini* 8.5.03.

12 See *Did the Australian Government contribute to the deaths of 353 asylum-seekers?* <www.sievx.com> Also Sydney Indymedia 'Did Australian policy kill 353?' <www.sydney.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=26028>.

13 *Migration News Sheet*, June 2003.

14 See Islamic Human Rights Commission, *The Plight of Chechen Refugees in Georgia*, 2003.

15 *RFE/RL Newslines* 7.7.03, *Baltic News Service* 12.10.01, Associated Press 6.11.02, Agence France Presse 15.11.02.

Appendix A: Stowaway deaths

Total number of deaths – 21

France (5)

- 12 May 2002: The decomposing body of an African was found in an area close to Deuil-la-Barre, Val d'Oise. Given that the area is in the landing path of planes, the authorities concluded that the man had probably hidden in a compartment under an aircraft and his body had fallen out when the wheel-bays opened in preparation for landing.
- 30 July 2002: A maintenance crew found the body of a young African man, believed to be a Cameroon national, in a wheel-bay of an airbus that had landed a day earlier.
- 15 September 2002: The body of an African stowaway, believed to be aged around 25, was found in a wheel-bay of an aircraft which landed in Paris following a flight from the Cameroons. The African probably died from hypothermia and lack of oxygen.
- February 2003: An 18-year-old Iraqi died at the port of Calais while attempting to climb on board a heavy goods vehicle which reversed. He lost his grip and fell under the lorry; his head was crushed under the wheels.
- 25 February 2003: The body of an African man, probably from Mali or Gabon, was found impaled on the staves of a pergola in the garden of a house in Groslay, north of Paris, which lies directly beneath a flight path into Charles-de-Gaulle airport.

(Sources: *Migration News Sheet* October 2002, March 2003, Agence France Presse 25.3.03, *Libération* 24.2.03)

Greece (1)

- December 2002: Police launched an investigation into the death of Mahmot Slav, an 18-year-old Iraqi who suffered fatal head injuries while trying to leave a Patras-bound truck in which he had hidden in the hope of reaching Italy.

Italy (8)

- February 2002: Two Kurds died on board a merchant ship, from the effects of fumes from grape skins.
- July 2002: The bodies of two Kurds, one named as 19-

year-old Ahmet Mohammad Irak, were found on a lorry carrying watermelons that had been loaded on a ferry that sailed from Patras, Greece to Brindisi, Italy. They were believed to have suffocated due to terrible heat and lack of air. Two other stowaways survived.

- December 2002: The bodies of four young people, presumed to be Romanians, were discovered inside a shipping container due to depart to Canada from the port city of Livorno on the Tuscan coast. The deceased could have died from the freezing conditions inside the container or from carbon dioxide poisoning.

(Sources: National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns 17.12.02, *La Repubblica* 11.12.02, *La Stampa* 2.7.02)

Spain (4)

- January 2003: Said B, a 29-year-old Moroccan, died after being run over as he attempted to hide in the lower part of a coach leaving Ceuta.

(Source: *La Vanguardia* <www.lavanguardia.es/web>)

- January: Two sub-Saharan African stowaways suffocated after creeping into the hold of a Cypriot-registered merchant ship bound for Cadiz, which was then hermetically sealed. Four other African stowaways survived.

- February: In Motril, Granada, a migrant is known to have died attempting to disembark from a boat.

(Sources: *Migration News Sheet*, February 2003, *SUR Digital* <www.diario-sur.es>)

UK (3)

- April 2002: A stowaway, believed to be African, froze to death in the undercover of a freight plane which travelled from Entebbe, Uganda, stopping at Cairo, then the Belgian port of Ostend, and finally arrived at Heathrow airport.

- December 2002: The bodies of two boys, probably aged between 12-14, were found in the undercarriage of a flight from Ghana after it landed at Heathrow airport.

(Sources: *BBC News* <www.news.bbc.co.uk> April 2002, *Independent* 6.12.02)

Appendix B: Deaths on overland routes

Total number of deaths – 50

Greece (4)

- November 2002: An Iranian woman died of exposure after a long trek across the Turkish border into Greece through cold and rain. Unable to believe his wife was dead, her husband carried the body of the 32-year-old woman, who had been dressed in summer clothes, to a roadside, where motorists saw him and called the police.
- January 2003: Two men from the east African state of Burundi, attempting to enter Greece from Turkey, died after stepping on landmines, near the river Evros (Merik in Turkish) on the Turkish-Greek border. A third immigrant was severely injured. There have still been no statements from Athens or Ankara of any intention of clearing the minefields along the Evros River.
- March 2003: A Somali migrant was killed, and it was reported that three other migrants were injured, after stepping on landmines as they attempted to cross into Greece from the border with Turkey.

(Sources: *Migration News Sheet*, April 2003, Agence France Presse 28.3.02, *Kathimerini* 7.11, 16.12.02, 16.1.03, *Frankfurter Rundschau* 6.1.03)

Italy (1)

- June 2003: The body of a Kurdish migrant was found in the back of a Greek truck on the Italian Slovenian border. A group of Kurds had climbed into the back of the truck which was carrying watermelons and where temperatures reached 50 degrees Centigrade.

(Source: *il manifesto* 17.6.03)

Beyond the EU's borders

Morocco/Mauritania (16)

- November 2002: A group of French tourists sent a message to Radio France International on 8 November stating that 16 of a group of 80 migrants from Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Ivory Coast, Mali, who had been intercepted en route to Europe, by the Moroccan police, had died of hunger, thirst and exhaustion after being expelled from Morocco.

(Source: *La Vanguardia* <www.lavanguardia.es/web> 2.12.02)

Slovakia (3)

- January 2003: The bodies of three Indian migrants were discovered near the eastern border with Ukraine. They had apparently frozen to death.

(Source: Associated Press 7.1.03)

Turkey (24)

- May 2002: The bodies of nineteen Afghans, nine of whom were children, were discovered by the police in the area of Kaldiran. Five more dead migrants from Pakistan were found in the area of Menteres. All migrants died from cold.

(Source: *Eleftherotypia* 31.5.02)

Ukraine (2)

- 27 February 2003: Ukrainian border guards discovered the body of a 26-year-old Indian immigrant a few meters from the Ukrainian-Slovak border. He had frozen to death.

- June 2003: The body of an Indian man was found in a forest not far from the Ukrainian-Slovakia border in the Zakarpatskij region. It is believed that the man may have died of heart disease.

(Source: Information from noborder network)

Appendix C: Deaths at sea

Total number of deaths – 670

Greece (52)

- April 2002: At least three people were killed when a fishing boat carrying migrants sank in rough seas off the Aegean island of Naxos. Around thirty or forty people – from India, Pakistan and Iraq – were on board the boat.
- May 2002: John Jackson, a Tanzanian aged 18, died several hours after being hospitalised, having jumped off a ship in the Gulf of Corinth. Another Tanzanian, Maneno Hamis, was reported missing.
- June 2002: At least five Somalis and the Turkish captain of a small fishing boat, packed with migrants, were killed when the boat capsized in a storm shortly after sailing from the Turkish town of Bodrum to the Greek island of Kos.
- September 2002: Greek police said they feared eight people were dead, after a group of 36 illegal immigrants, found wandering on the coastline at Kyparissia in the western Peloponnese, told the police they a group of 44 migrants had sailed from the Turkish coast, but were then abandoned at sea on wooden boats, and told to make their own way ashore. One of the boats, carrying eight people, sank as it headed for the shore. The bodies of two Pakistanis were initially recovered; several weeks later, another body was discovered by a fisherman.
- October 2002: Greek coast guards found nine bodies, six of them children, including a baby, near the island of Lesbos in the eastern Aegean. The drowned may have been Afghanis who were most probably being brought to Greece from the Turkish mainland.
- December 2002: Thirteen people drowned in the Aegean after two boats, which had set off from Turkey, ran aground on 19 December. One of the drowned men was from Afghanistan.
- 24 December 2002: Two men and a two-year-old girl drowned when a small vessel crammed with refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan ran aground in the Ionian Sea near Corfu.
- January 2003: Six Iraqi Kurds died of exposure on a Greek boat carrying illegal immigrants to Italy. The boat was discovered in the Ionian Sea, and the Greek skipper was arrested.
- Early January 2003: The bodies of three migrants were washed up on the Aegean island of Simi, near Turkey. Coast guards said no ships were reported to have recently sunk near the island, adding that the bodies had been in the water for a long time.

(Sources: *Associated Press* 18.4, 28.6.02, 6.1.03, *Kathimerini* 22.5, 17, 21, 29.10, 23, 28.12.02, 22.1.03, *Reuters* 3.9, 16.10.02, *Agence France Presse* 18.10, 24.12.02)

Italy (136)

- March 7 2002: A barge, carrying dozens of immigrants, was wrecked in the strait of Sicily, 65 miles south of Lampedusa, leaving twelve people dead.
- June 2002: Four male bodies were recovered from the sea

after an incident in which traffickers, armed with knives, forced 39 Kurds to jump into the sea off the coast of Castro, a small village on the coast of Salerno, facing Albania. One 20-year-old youth who could not swim begged to be spared, but was simply thrown overboard. Two of the survivors were treated for knife wounds.

- July 2002: Two people drowned and several were injured when an Italian coastal patrol boat hit a motorised dinghy which it was attempting to force back. The incident happened close to Albania's southern shore near Vlora.

- 15 September 2002: Thirty-seven people drowned after a fragile boat, carrying migrants who had started their journey in Liberia, capsized in a storm off Sicily's southwest coast at Porto Emperdocle, near Agrigento.

- Late September 2002: At least 15 migrants, believed to be Tunisians, drowned after being forced to leap into the water in stormy weather, some 300 meters off the coast of Scoglitti, in the province of Ragusa.

- January 2003: A Russian merchant ship discovered a small vessel with twelve people on board – six of whom were dead and the remaining six in a critical condition. Greek port authorities had previously reported spotting the small boat, with thirty people on board, only to lose track of it. The vessel may have left for Italy from the coast of Greece or Albania, on January 16.

- 15/16 June 2003: At least sixty people are believed to have drowned when the boat they were sailing in sank in the Sicily Channel, south of the island of Lampedusa. There were three survivors.

(Sources: *La Repubblica* 19.1.03, *Guardian* 16.9.02, *Observer* 29.9.02, *Guardian Editor* 28.9.02, *Italy Daily* <www.ItalyDaily.it> 19, 23.9.02, *Frankfurter Rundschau* 17.0.92, *La Stampa* 9.6, 2.12.02, *Independent* 23.7.02, 19.6.03, *El País*, English language version 20.1.03)

Spain (104)

- April 2002: The bodies of eleven migrants were recovered after the small fishing boat they were travelling in capsized near the island of Lanzarote. Seven migrants survived after swimming ashore.

- December 26 2002: Seven bodies were retrieved after a rickety and overcrowded boat travelling from Morocco capsized after hitting rocks in the Strait of Gibraltar near the southern Spanish town of Tarifa.

- January 2003: Spanish police dragged three bodies from the sea off the southern tip of the island of Tenerife after the boat in which they were travelling sank just fifty metres from the shore. A helicopter identified another body further out to sea.

- January 2002: Nine corpses were recovered from the sea near Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, after the sinking of a patera. The victims were probably sub-Saharan Africans. A further three migrants were missing but, because of the strong currents, their bodies will probably never be found. (Twelve people survived.)

- January 2003: The corpses of seven immigrants were

Appendix C: Deaths at sea continued

recovered off the coast of Tarifa (Cádiz). Forty-two people had been travelling in a fragile boat which had crashed against the rocks.

- January 2003: A young woman from sub-Saharan Africa died when she jumped off a makeshift boat into the water in order to reach the shore of Fuerteventura. Thirteen other migrants are missing.

- February 2003: Eighteen people were feared drowned after being lost at sea on February 7 around Fuerteventura in the Canaries.

- February 2003: The body of a sub-Saharan African, believed to have been trying to swim from Morocco to Ceuta was found near the waters of the city. The authorities confirmed that this was the third case this year. The two other victims were a sub-Saharan African and a Tunisian.

- 20 February 2003: At least twelve people died of hunger and thirst on board a patera which had departed from a beach near El Alaiún in the western Sahara. Six people survived the journey.

- April 2003: Twelve North Africans died after spending fourteen days at sea, during which they had no food and were compelled to drink urine and sea water. Five survivors – the majority of whom were later issued with deportation orders – were rescued by a Spanish fishing craft in the Gibraltar Strait.

- April 2003: One migrant died, but 42 Moroccans and sub-Saharan Africans travelling on a makeshift boat were rescued near Trafalgar on the Cadiz coast.

- 5 June 2003: The bodies of two Moroccan migrants were retrieved by coast guards off the coast near Salobrena near Granada. They were part of a group of 28 people travelling on board a rubber dinghy who tried to avoid capture after being detected by coast guard officials. Twenty were apprehended by the police.

- June 2003: The bodies of three sub-Saharan Africans were retrieved and nine other migrants are missing after a small boat carrying 23 people sank close to the Canary Island of Fuerteventura.

- June 10 2003: Nine people were feared dead after their boat capsized near the coast of Fuerteventura in the Canary Isles. The other 13 people on board were rescued by a patrol boat that had come out to intercept them.

- July 2003: The bodies of two Moroccans were retrieved from among the rocks after an inflatable boat ran aground off the coast of Tarifa in southern Spain, on the Strait of Gibraltar. Twelve people survived.

(Sources: *Migration News Sheet*, January, March, May, July 2003, *El País*, 3.1.4, 11.6.03, *El País* English language version 20.1.16.4.03, Agence France Presse 3.1.03, *La Provincia* 28.2.03, *Europa Press* 4.6.03, *El Periódico* 3.6.03, *La Vanguardia* <www.lavanguardia.es/web>, *Europa Sur Digital* <www.europasur.com>, *BBC News Service* <www.news.bbc.co.uk> 25.4.03)

UK (1)

- June 2002: A Russian man drowned after attempting to cross the Channel in a canoe in June. Another man was rescued after the craft capsized and was taken to hospital suffering from hypothermia.

(Source: *Daily Express* 13.6.02)

Beyond the EU's borders

Libya (68)

- 30 November 2002: An estimated 68 Africans from the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa regions, are believed to have drowned when a fishing vessel carrying 120 people sank in bad weather off the Libyan coast.

(Sources: *Migration News Sheet*, January 2003, *La Stampa* 2.12.02, *Italy Daily* <www.ItalyDaily.it> 2.12.02)

Morocco (26)

- 17 January 2003: At least 26 Nigerians drowned in the Atlantic Ocean while attempting to reach Europe via the Moroccan coastal town of Tangier.

(Source: *Triumph* 6.3.03)

Tunisia (207)

- October 2002: At least eight Tunisian migrants, trying to reach Italy, drowned after their small boat capsized off the coast of Tunisia. They were among ten men who left the port city of Chebba on 20 October. One man survived and a search was instigated for the missing tenth man.

- 20 June 2003: Although only twenty bodies were initially recovered, an estimated 190 people are feared to have drowned when a boat sank off the Tunisian coast, 70 miles from Sfax. Coast guards and naval vessels rescued 41 people.

- 29 June: At least nine people are believed to have drowned when a vessel, believed to be carrying 45 migrants, capsized in Tunisian territorial waters. The vessel had probably departed from Libya.

(Source: *Italy Daily* <www.ItalyDaily.it>)

Turkey (44)

- December 2002: The Istanbul NGO 'Aegean Survivors' says that a rubber boat carrying an estimate fifty Africans from the Gambia, Ghana, Ethiopia and Somalia sunk after it set sail from the Turkish resort city of Bodrum to the Greek island of Kos. There were only six survivors, all rescued by Turkish coast guards.

(Source: *The Independent*, *Banjul*, 17.12.02 *El País* 3.1.03, Agence France Presse 3.1.03)

Western Sahara (32)

- December 2002: 32 sub-Saharan Africans, heading for the Canary Islands, drowned off the shores of the West Sahara. The corpses were discovered 40 kilometres north of El Aaiún, the capital of West Sahara.

(Sources: *El Periódico* 2.12.02, *Migration News Sheet*, February, June 2003, *Guardian* 21.6.03)