

Appeal to MEPs: Reject the “return” directive

Wednesday 18 June 2008, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 18 June 2008).

During the next plenary session in Strasbourg (16-19 June), members of the European Parliament are being asked to vote on the so-called “Return Directive”.

The text has already been adopted by EU Interior Ministers and includes an administrative detention period for irregular migrants of up to 18 months. This is a completely exaggerated measure which establishes the basis for the real criminalisation of migrants, who will be deprived of their freedom and detained in inhumane and improperly-run structures, without having committed any crime.

Furthermore, the directive foresees the possibility to detain and expel unaccompanied minors, to return migrants to transit countries, different from their home countries, plus the possibility of enforcing a re-entry ban valid for the whole of Europe for up to 5 years.

Many procedural guarantees and legal benefits for migrants wishing to appeal against a return decision have disappeared from the final text, therefore also endangering the rights of those migrants who could lawfully claim refugee protection status.

Because this directive lowers European and international human rights’ protection standards by worsening migrants’ reception conditions,

Because what is at stake is not only EU migration policies but also our social model,

Because the law must be equal for all and because fundamental freedoms are not negotiable,

We call on members of the European Parliament not to adopt this directive.

First signatories of the petition :

Belgium: Pierre Mertens, writer; Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne, film directors; Eric Toussaint, Doctor in political science, chairman of the CADTM; France Arets, spokeswoman for the Collectif de Résistance Aux Centres Pour Etrangers CRACPE (Group of Resistance To the Centres For Foreigners), Liège ; Georges-Henry Beauthier, lawyer, former president of the League of Human Rights; Céline Delforge, representative for the Brussels region, ECOLO; François Houtart, emeritus professor at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve; Karine Lalieux, Belgian federal representative, PS (Socialist Party); Philippe Moureaux, Belgian senator, PS (Socialist Party); Clotilde Nyssens, Belgian federal representative, CDH (Humanist Democrat Centre); Carine Russo, the White Marches, Belgian senator, ECOLO; Dan Van Raemdonck, president of honour of the European Association for Human Rights (AEDH), vice-chairman of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH);; Thierry Michel, film director

France: Manu Chao, singer; Susan George, writer and economist, founding member of ATTAC; Toure Kunda, musician; Philippe Diaz, film director Odile Tobner, chairman of Survie; Catherine Samary, économist; Claude Quémar, chairman of CADTM France; Ignacio Ramonet, writer, president Media Watch Global; Bernard Cassen, “président d’honneur” Attac, association Mémoire des luttes; Claude Calame, Directeur d’études EHESS, Paris.

Germany: Elmar Arvater, professor at the Free University of Berlin; Friederike Habermann, writer; Birgit Mahnkopf, professor at the Berlin School of Economics; Morus Markard, professor at the Free University of Berlin; Albert Scherr, president of the Committee for fundamental rights and democracy and university professor; Martin Singe, member of the Committee for fundamental rights and democracy; Harald Neuber, Journaliste

Greece: Michalis Grigoriou, architect and professor at the Ionian University; Dimitrios Halastis, artist; Yannis Kakoulides, writer; Tasos Koronakis, Greek Social Forum; Georgios Makris, actor; Jina Politi, professor at the Aristotle University; Nadia Valavani, writer and economist

Italy: Moni Ovadia, actor, writer; Margherita Hack, astrophysicist; Danilo Zolo, philosopher and lawyer; Wilma Labate, film director; Dario Fo, playwright

Spain: Pilar Bardem, actress; Marcelino Camacho, union activist; Jaume d'Urgell, journalist, editor of the journal *democracia.es*; Rosa Regás, writer and former director of the "Biblioteca Nacional" (National library) Pedro Almodovar, film maker

Portugal: Jorge Silva Melo, film director, actor and writer; Luis Moita, assistant director of the Autonomous University of Lisbon