

Saturday 13 May, 3 pm

MARCH AGAINST THE WALLS FOR A WELCOMING EUROPE

In recent years Europe has been buffeted by winds of intolerance and closure against people of foreign origin and in particular against those who reach our borders in search of protection.

Instead of giving fair and effective answers providing rules that allow people to cross borders safely and legally, short-sighted governments and parliaments feed fears, often through campaigns of outright criminalisation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Thus, in 2016 the EU signed an agreement with Erdogan to stop hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and persecution, mainly Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis, preventing them from reaching EU borders. Similarly, with the support of the entire EU, in order to circumvent the ban on refoulement under the Geneva Convention, Italy has conceived the Libyan SAR zone and the so-called coast guard, blocking tens of thousands of people in the hell of detention centres where crimes against humanity are committed, as repeatedly denounced by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of The Hague. Torture, rape, widespread violence, murder and enslavement are perpetrated by the same militias that contend for territory and run the so-called coast guard with the deafening silence of EU governments who, in effect, endorse a delegated form of refoulement.

Meanwhile, to the east of the EU, on the Balkan route and beyond, with the consent of almost all political forces and parliaments, governments have started building walls, resorting to increasingly sophisticated forms of border control to prevent people fleeing from getting to safety.

In line with this trend, anticipating it somewhat, the EU has organised a proper army responding to the Frontex Agency, to control EU external borders.

Where there are no walls, the practice of illegal refoulement at the external borders of those seeking protection from an EU country is systematic. This impediment is also implemented through the use of so-called <informal readmissions> at internal borders, in a chain mechanism that has the same objective: to remove foreign citizens from EU territory and prevent them from applying for asylum. On the Italian-Slovenian border in 2022, Italy was responsible for such serious violations.

The idea that emerges clearly, even from the main argument used by the leaders of many EU countries, is that we are under attack and that our enemy is represented by tens of thousands of refugees fleeing wars, by families, mainly minors, in search of a future. An enemy who wants, peacefully and without hiding, to build a safe future away from wars and violence.

We think, instead, that Italy and the Europe of peoples are better than this dangerous caricature that prevents those seeking protection from reaching a decent life, by denying their history, culture and legal civilisation and building walls.

For this reason, on 13 May at 15:00 we have convened the first 'March Against the Walls for a welcoming Europe' at the border between Slovenia and Italy, the last part of that Balkan route along which the hopes of tens of thousands of people are dashed.

We want to give voice to that part of Europe and Italy that does not surrender to walls and fear and wants to protect the rights of people seeking protection.

START: 15:00 from Socerb Castle, Socerb 7, 6275 Črni Kal, Slovenia.

ARRIVAL: 16:30 at Piazza centrale, San Dorligo della Valle.

