

Euro–African Non–Governmental Manifesto on Migrations, Fundamental Rights and Freedom of Movement

Rabat manifesto

July 1st,

As actors in the civil societies of Subsaharan Africa, North Africa and Europe, we met in Rabat in a Euro–African non–governmental conference on the 30th of June and 1st of July 2006.

We share indignation about the war that is increasingly being waged along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines. We refuse the division of humanity between some who may freely move about the planet and some who may not. We also refuse to live in a world where borders are more and more militarized, dividing our continents and trying to transform every group of countries into a fortress.

Considering that respect for the freedom of movement, which is a fundamental right stated in article 131 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, is a pre–condition for the exercise of the other fundamental rights, and that the right to leave one’s country set forth in article 131 necessarily entails that of settling in another country ;

Considering that the current restrictions on the freedom of movement restrict only the poorest and therefore reflect, besides the growth of xenophobic nationalisms, the elitist fear of underprivileged populations ;

Considering that, contrary to generally accepted ideas and as acknowledged in the 2004 UNCTAD report, Africa is still providing funds for Europe even while the income gap per inhabitant between Europe and Africa keeps increasing ;

Considering that security policies make people consider migrations as a problem and a threat, whereas they have forever been a natural phenomenon and, far from being a calamity for developed countries, they are invaluable economic and cultural contributions ;

Considering that security measures will not stop migratory flows, since these are determined by many factors, and that historical experiences have shown that the free circulation of humans does not threaten the sovereignty or the security of states, whereas the real threat tends to lie today in the free circulation of capital ;

Considering that the respect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 remains a goal to be pursued by adopting measures instoring freedom of movement and the rehabilitation of the right of asylum, as well as an effective respect of the right to development ;

We demand :

- that governments abandon the securitarian and repressive ideology which currently inspires migration policies, in particular the « externalization » of asylum and border controls, the criminalization of migrations, as well as all racist, xenophobic or discriminatory laws ;
- that new migration policies be based on the respect of human rights, on a real equality of rights for persons living on the same territory and, in the immediate future, on the regularization of all undocumented migrants ;
- that illegal residence be depenalized, and that help be provided to persons in that situation ;
- that agreements for the readmission of deported persons be cancelled, and that all international negotiations with a view to such agreements be abandoned ;
- the suppression of short residence visas and of all constraints on leaving a country, and the detailed and controlled justification of any refusal to grant a residence visa, with a strict symmetry between Africa and Europe in the conditions of delivery of such visas ;
- the closing down of all detention places and other devices aiming at stopping people at the borders ;
- the abolition of all measures hindering possibilities of family unification ;
- the complete and genuine enforcement of all instruments of international protection, in order that the asylum right should not be reduced to a mere fiction ;
- that all persons recognized as refugees be granted complete freedom of movement and of settling, and protection throughout the world ;
- that UNHCR be financially and juridically reformed in order to provide effective protection for asylum seekers and refugees instead of protecting the interests of the contributing governments ;
- the ratification of the International Convention on the protection of migrant workers and their families and its insertion in national legislations, the ratification of the International Labour Organization conventions, in particular conventions 143 and 97 and their implementation ;
- that any Euro-African negotiation be based on the principle of equality between partners, and that African leaders, who have been so deficient in the defence of their peoples' interests, take on their responsibilities, particularly by challenging the Euro-African partnership agreements ;

- the setting up of mechanisms ensuring food sovereignty, and the cancellation of agreements which endanger the future of African agriculture ;
- the suppression of conditions imposed on African countries in international negotiations, more particularly that providing for the subcontracting of the anti-migrations fight ;
- the unconditional cancellation of the debt of Southern countries, and the repatriation of their assets placed in foreign banks.