

Europe's (digital) borders must fall

End the expansion of the EU's EURODAC database

Civil society calls for an end to the expansion of EURODAC, the EU database for the registration of asylum-seekers. EURODAC, designed to collect and store migrants' data, is being transformed into an expansive, violent surveillance tool that will treat people seeking protection as crime suspects. This will include children as young as 6 whose fingerprints and facial images will be integrated into the database.

EURODAC is being expanded to enforce the EU's discriminatory and hostile asylum and migration policies: increasing deportations, detention and a broader climate of racialised criminalisation. The endless expansion of EURODAC [must be stopped](#).

What is EURODAC?

Since its inception in 2003, the EU has repeatedly expanded the scope, size and function of EURODAC.

Created to implement the Dublin system and record the country responsible for processing asylum claims, it originally stored only limited information, mostly fingerprints, on few categories of people: asylum-seekers and people apprehended irregularly crossing the EU's borders. From the start, this system has been a means to [enforce a discriminatory and harmful deportation regime](#), premised on a false framework of 'illegality' in migration.

After [a first reform in 2013](#) allowing police to access the database, the EU continues to detach EURODAC from its asylum framework to re-package it as a system pursuing 'wider immigration purposes'. The changes were announced in 2020 in the EU Migration Pact, the EU's so-called 'fresh start on migration'. Rather than a fresh start, the proposals contain the [harshes proposals](#) in the history of the EU's migration policy: more detention, more violence, and a wider, evolved tool of surveillance in the EURODAC database to track, push back and deport 'irregular' migrants.

How is the EURODAC expansion endangering people's human rights?

More people included into the database: Concretely EURODAC would collect a vast swathe of personal data (photographs, copies of travel and identity documents, etc.) on a wider range of people: those resettled, relocated, disembarked following search and rescue operations and arrested at borders or within national territories.

Data collection on children: The reform would also lower the threshold for storing data in the system to the age of six, extend the data retention periods and weaken the conditions for law enforcement consultation of the database.

Including facial images into the database: The reform also proposes the expansion to include facial images. Comparisons and searches run in the database can be based on facial recognition – a technology notoriously error-prone and unreliable that threatens the essence of dignity, non-discrimination and privacy rights. The database functions as a genuine tool of violence as it authorises the use of coercion against asylum-seekers who refuse to give up their data, such as detention and forced collection. Not only do these changes contradict European data protection standards, they demonstrate how the EU's institutional racism creates differential standards between migrants and non-migrants.

Access by law enforcement: EURODAC's revamp also facilitates its connection to other existing EU migration and police databases as part of the so-called 'interoperability' initiative - the creation of an overarching EU information system designed to increase police identity checks of

non-EU nationals, leading to increased racial profiling. These measures also unjustly equate asylum seekers with criminals. Lastly, the production of statistics from EURODAC data and other databases is supposed to inform future policymaking on migration movement trends. In reality, it is expected that they will facilitate illegal pushbacks and overpolicing of humanitarian assistance.

End the expansion of EURODAC

The EURODAC reform is a gross violation of the right to seek international protection, a chilling conflation of migration and criminality and an out-of-control surveillance instrument. The far-right is already anticipating the next step, calling for the collection of DNA.

The EURODAC reform is one of many examples of the digitalisation of Fortress Europe. It is inconsistent with fundamental rights and will undermine frameworks of protection and rights of people on the move.

We demand:

1. That the EU institutions immediately reject the expansion of EURODAC.
2. For legislators to prevent further violence and ensure protection at and within borders when rethinking the EURODAC system.
3. For legislators and EU Member States to establish safe and regular pathways for migrants and protective reception conditions.

1. AG Nachhaltige Digitalisierung
2. Abolish Frontex
3. Access Now
4. Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland
5. AlgoRace
6. AlgorithmWatch
7. Altera
8. Asociación Por Ti Mujer
9. Asociación Rumiñahui
10. Association for Legal Intervention (Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej)
11. AsyLex
12. Bits of Freedom
13. Blindspots
14. Bürgerrechte & Polizei/CILIP
15. CNCD-11.11.11
16. CNVOS Slovenia
17. Center for AI and Digital Policy (CAIDP)
18. Center for Information Technology and Development
19. Centre for Muslims' Rights in Denmark - CEDA
20. Centre for Peace Studies
21. Chaos Computer Club
22. Civil Liberties Union for Europe
23. Coalizione Italiana per le Libertà e i Diritti civili (CILD)
24. D64
25. Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja
26. Derechos Digitales
27. Digitalcourage
28. Digitale Gesellschaft
29. Društvo Parada ponosa (Ljubljana Pride Association)
30. European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
31. Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice

32. Equipo Decenio Afrodescendiente- España
33. epicenter.works
34. EuroMed Rights
35. European Civic Forum
36. European Digital Rights (EDRI)
37. European Movement Italy
38. European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
39. European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA)
40. Forum InformatikerInnen für Frieden und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung (FiFF)
41. Fundación CIVES
42. Fundacja Centrum Badaní Migracyjnych
43. Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
44. Greek Forum of Migrants
45. Greek Forum of Refugees
46. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
47. Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights
48. Homo Digitalis
49. Homo Faber Association
50. I Have Rights
51. IDAY Liberia Coalition Inc.
52. Infokolpa
53. info.nodes
54. Initiative Center to Support Social Action "Ednannia"
55. Institucion De Asuntos Culturales De España
56. Institute Circle
57. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
58. International Women* Space
59. Irídia - Centre per la defensa dels drets humans
60. IT-Pol Denmark
61. Ivorian Community of Greece
62. KD Gmajna
63. KOK German NGO Network against trafficking in Human Beings
64. Kif Kif vzw
65. LDH - Ligue des droits de l'Homme France
66. La Strada International
67. Lafede.cat - Organitzacions per a la Justícia Global
68. Legal Centre Lesbos
69. Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme
70. Ligue des droits humains (Belgium)
71. Maison du Peuple d'Europe
72. Mobile Info Team
73. Naga
74. National Federation of Polish NGOs (OFOP)
75. netzbegrünung - Verein für Grüne Netzkultur e.V.
76. New Europeans International
77. Northern Lights Aid
78. Novact
79. Open Knowledge Foundation Germany
80. PIC - Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment
81. Peace Institute
82. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
83. Polish Migration Forum Foundation (Fundacja Polskie Forum Migracyjne)
84. Polish Women's Strike
85. Politiscope
86. Privacy International

87. Privacy Network
88. Prostitution Information Center
89. Quaker Council for European Affairs
90. Queen Mary University of London
91. RED AMINVI
92. Racism and Technology Center
93. Red Umbrella Sweden
94. Refugee Law Lab, York University
95. Refugee Legal Support (RLS)
96. Revibra Europe
97. SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation
98. Samos Volunteers
99. Sans-Papiers Anlaufstelle Zürich SPAZ
100. Sea-Watch e.V.
101. Siempre vzw/asbl
102. Statewatch
103. Stichting LOS
104. Stop Wapenhandel
105. Stowarzyszenie Port, Przestrzeń otwarta
106. Taraaz
107. The Border Violence Monitoring Network
108. Waterford Integration Services
109. Yoga and Sport with Refugees
110. Zavod za kulturo raznolikosti Open