

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. Àltera
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. Deserteurs- und Flüchtlingsberatung
28. Digitalcourage
29. Digitale Gesellschaft
30. Društvo Parada ponosa (Ljubljana Pride Association)
31. European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)

32. Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice
33. Equipo Decenio Afrodescendiente- España
34. epicenter.works
35. EuroMed Rights
36. European Civic Forum
37. European Digital Rights (EDRi)
38. European Movement Italy
39. European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
40. European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA)
41. Forum InformatikerInnen für Frieden und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung (FIFF)
42. Fundación CIVES
43. Fundacja Centrum Badaní Migracyjnych
44. Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
45. Greek Forum of Migrants
46. Greek Forum of Refugees
47. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
48. Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights
49. Homo Digitalis
50. Homo Faber Association
51. I Have Rights
52. IDAY Liberia Coalition Inc.
53. Infokolpa
54. info.nodes
55. Initiative Center to Support Social Action "Ednannia"
56. Institucion De Asuntos Culturales De España
57. Institute Circle
58. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
59. International Women* Space
60. Irídia - Centre per la defensa dels drets humans
61. IT-Pol Denmark
62. Ivorian Community of Greece
63. KD Gmajna
64. KOK German NGO Network against trafficking in Human Beings
65. Kif Kif vzw
66. LDH - Ligue des droits de l'Homme France
67. La Strada International
68. Lafede.cat - Organitzacions per a la Justícia Global
69. Lawyers Without Borders
70. Legal Centre Lesbos
71. Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme
72. Ligue des droits humains (Belgium)
73. Maison du Peuple d'Europe
74. Mobile Info Team
75. Naga
76. National Federation of Polish NGOs (OFOP)
77. netzbegrünung - Verein für Grüne Netzkultur e.V.
78. New Europeans International
79. Northern Lights Aid
80. Novact
81. Open Knowledge Foundation Germany
82. PIC - Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment
83. Peace Institute
84. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
85. Polish Migration Forum Foundation (Fundacja Polskie Forum Migracyjne)
86. Polish Women's Strike

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