

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/University of Córdoba
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. Civil Liberties Union for Europe
22. Coalizione Italiana per le Libertà e i Diritti civili (CILD)
23. D64
24. Danes je nov dan, Inštitut za druga vprašanja
25. Derechos Digitales
26. Digitalcourage
27. Digitale Gesellschaft
28. Društvo Parada ponosa (Ljubljana Pride Association)
29. European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
30. Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice
31. Equipo Decenio Afrodescendiente- España

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

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