

7 - Summary of the first day of the conference on externalisation of borders

Audio No. 7

Thomas Santangelo: The first day of the conference on outsourcing policies organized by ASGI has just ended and ASGI's lawyer Cristina Laura Cecchini will briefly tell us how today's conference was held.

Cristina Laura Cecchini: Today was an extremely participatory and interesting day that has seen two worlds, Africa and Europe, talking to each other and often agreeing on many points that were shared. The first part of the day was devoted to the effects of externalisation on detention practices, on the massive increase in the phenomenon of returns and how this is aimed at restricting freedom of movement which, on the contrary, must be a guaranteed right as an instrumental tool to the right of asylum. Therefore, the idea that came up is that any practice of detention must be overcome.

This afternoon, on the other hand, we focused on the issue of trafficking and, above all, on the consequences of the externalisation of borders. Through various interventions, we have outlined and specified that victims of trafficking should be recognised as refugees and that the border-blocking policies that we are currently implementing are therefore systematically contrary to the right of asylum. As such, these policies expose the victims of trafficking to a continuous and serious vulnerability that are trying to be overcome through the instrument of voluntary return. The latest speeches have been aimed at highlighting the important role that international organisations have in this process; in other words, the fact that victims of trafficking are given no solution other than voluntary repatriation. In particular, it was discussed, firstly, that voluntary return cannot be considered as a solution, given the conditions under which consent is given. Secondly, the fact that there is no form of protection in Libya and, finally, the fact that the mechanism created by the UNHCR, which refers to evacuation and resettlement, is a mechanism through which European states, after having made the blockade, choose a few refugees they like in order to be able to say: *'we are saving the right of asylum'*.