
Council of Europe: migration, “pushbacks are illegal, unacceptable and must end”

The Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) calls on European governments to “protect foreign nationals deprived of their liberty under immigration legislation from any ill-treatment and to put an end to pushbacks at land or sea borders, particularly at the borders of the European Union”. The CPT stated this to mark the publication of the 2022 annual report on seven periodic visits (Croatia, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and San Marino) and nine ad hoc visits to examine specific issues (Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Türkiye and the United Kingdom). Since 2009, the CPT has received “numerous allegations of ill-treatment of foreign nationals by police and border guards”. An increasing number of people claim they have been “violently removed by force”, without consideration for their personal circumstances, during interceptions at sea, in transit zones, at police and border guard stations. “Many European countries face very complex migration challenges at their borders, but this does not mean they can ignore their human rights obligations. Pushbacks are illegal, unacceptable and must end. Governments must have effective safeguards to protect people who are detained under immigration laws and put in place mechanisms to prevent any kind of ill-treatment at borders”, said CPT President Alan Mitchell.

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