

Actions in four countries to support 'No to Frontex'-vote in Swiss referendum

21 April 2022 – On 15 May Switzerland will hold a referendum on its financial contribution to Frontex, giving its population the unique chance to vote against involvement in the EU border guard agency. To support a 'No to Frontex'-vote, during the next days in four countries activists of groups that are part of the Abolish Frontex network will protest against the [national contributions](#) (equipment and personnel) to Frontex operations.

A coalition of groups and organisations in Switzerland collected over 60,000 signatures to make the referendum possible. For the first time, the national contribution of a country to Frontex comes to vote. While it is clear that Switzerland as a non-EU but Schengen-associated state is embedded into a different context than EU member states, the Swiss Referendum can give an important lead on how to tackle public and political responsibility on the consequences of the brutal EU border regime in which Frontex plays a crucial role. EU member states make (military and security) personnel and equipment, such as patrol vessels and surveillance planes, available for Frontex operations – Operations which lead to violence and illegal pushbacks against refugees and which force them to take more dangerous migration routes, leading to more deaths.

Activists in Belgium, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands will express their solidarity with activities in the coming days, which will highlight national contributions to Frontex. In Italy people will take to the streets in Rome (demonstration "Desert War – Protect Earth – Abolish Frontex", 22 April) and join a debate in Milan (23 April). In Germany an info event on the Swiss referendum and workshop on German contributions to Frontex will take place in Berlin (24 April). In the Netherlands there will be a demonstration in The Hague, along ministries, the parliament and the lobby office of the arms industry (22 April). And in Belgium a visual public action is planned.

In Switzerland itself [dozens](#) of actions and discussions will happen up until the referendum vote at 15 May. According to the 'No Frontex Referendum'-committee: 'Switzerland benefits greatly from Europe's violent defence against migration. As a home to commodity companies, an international banking centre and an arms factory, Switzerland is an important profiteer within the capitalist world system and thus a contributor to many of the causes of refuge.'

The Abolish Frontex network was launched last year to connect and strengthen protests against the EU's deadly border regime. Over 120 organisations and groups in EU countries and beyond have joined the informal network that strives for freedom of movement for everyone. On 18 December last year over 40 actions in twelve countries took place as part of the international Abolish Frontex action days.