

# European Union pays Gaddafi to fight immigration

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi signed a contract of £50 million with the European Union to stop immigrants from entering Europe through Libya.



Every year, thousands of people attempt to cross the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy and many die en route, while those who are caught are taken back to camps in Libya where conditions are alarming. In 2008, Italy and Libya agreed a deal that allows the Italian navy to intercept illegal immigrants and return them to Libya. The move already triggered sharp criticism from the UN's refugee agency and human rights groups.

On Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Libya and the European Union finalised a co-operation agreement on illegal migration. Pan-African co-operation, mobility, management of migration flows, border control and international protection are addressed in the accord. Under the agreement signed in Tripoli by European Union Commissioners Cecilia Malmstrom and Steven Fule, the EU will also provide Libya with 50 million Euros over the next 3 years to combat the flow of illegal migrants to Europe and to protect refugees

## **Colonel Gaddafi's demand of £4.1 billions during his speech cases controversy**

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi had demanded for £4.1 billion a year from the European Union to stop illegal immigration which "threatens to turn Europe black". Colonel Gaddafi made the demand as he ended his controversial two-day visit to Italy where he caused outrage in the Catholic Church by hosting two convert to Islam parties. Furious, Italian members of parliament (MPs) slammed his demands made in his farewell

speech for cash to stop immigration and compared them to a Mafia extortion racket.

In the speech Gaddafi, 67, told his audience in Rome that Italy needs to convince her European allies to accept this Libyan proposal of 5 billion euro to Libya to stop illegal immigration, otherwise Europe runs the risk of turning into black. "We need support from the European Union to stop this army trying to get across from Libya, which is their entry point. At the moment there is a dangerous level of immigration from Africa into Europe, and we don't know what will happen. We don't know if Europe will remain an advanced and cohesive continent or if it will be destroyed by this barbarian invasion. We have to imagine that this could happen, but before, it does we need to work together" Gaddafi said.

Critics immediately targeted Gaddafi, pointing out how the UN High Commission for Refugees closed its Libyan office earlier this year, and opposition MPs called on Silvio Berlusconi to distance himself from the Libyan leader and his attempts to secure money from the EU. Silvana Mura, of the anti-sleaze party Italy of Values, said: "We need to know immediately if the Italian government intends to support this proposal which is in essence an unacceptable blackmail". And Luigi de Magistris, an MEP with Italy of Values, said: "The dictator Gaddafi wants five billion euro to stop immigration, but where will the money go?".

### **Libya buys coastal monitoring system to curb illegal migrants**

Libya agreed to pay Irish-based company Transas Marine about 28 million dollars for a radar system to monitor its vast coastline for illegal migrants and outbreaks of pollution. The system will cover the entire Libyan coast, which stretches almost 2,000 kilometres (1,240 miles), Transas Marine said after a contract-signing ceremony in Tripoli. Libya will have a system that is one of the most modern and efficient in the world and « even detect small boats used by illegal immigrants" said Christopher Loiz, head of the company's French unit. Transas Marine hoped to complete the installation of the system of 15 monitoring stations within 16 months, which Loiz said cost more than 20 million euros.

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