

The Balkan Info/Alarm-Phone

Hundreds of migrants are still making their way through the Balkans towards central Europe. In Serbia around 300 people are arriving every day, who made the difficult crossings through Bulgaria or Macedonia. From the contacts and the experiences of the last months from activists in Budapest, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Skopje, Sofia, Thessaloniki, Athens, and Northern Italy the question has arisen whether it would be possible to establish a common structure along the route, which could support people on the move in times of danger and distress.

The idea has been discussed to set up an Info/Alarm-Phone where the knowledge gathered can be made more accessible in a systematic way to people on the move.

The Balkan Info/Alarm-Phone would complement the existing networks, strengthen the collaboration of local groups and could facilitate the exchange of information and also the continuity of a long-term transnational support structure.

This draft proposes that a discussion of the project takes place; first within internal structures in order to collect ideas to then open up the discussion to a wider circle during the workshop at the Balkan-route networking meeting at the NoBorder camp in Thessaloniki, on Saturday, 16.07. from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.

Until then, the practicability of as many issues as possible should be clarified.

Building on the experience of the Watch the Med Alarmphone

The inspiration of the project is the Watch the Med Alarmphone. The friends from the Alarmphone could help with the technical and logistical requirements to set up an emergency/info number that could be reached from the entire route. In different cities across Europe or even further, shift teams would need to be established. These shift teams would have the number directed to them for the period of their shift. They would then see what information they can give out directly and for which cases they would contact the local support groups, lawyers or other institutions. In some cases, return-calls by translators would need to be organised. This could be a useful transnational work share, where different resources can merge to a fruitful outcome in support of the people on the move.

For more information see: <http://movements-journal.org/issues/02.kaempfe/13.stierl-watchthemed-alarmphone.html>, <https://vimeo.com/157990644>, as well as the Brochure for its first year anniversary at ffm-online.org.

What can the Balkan Info/Alarm-Phone provide?

However, there would be some large differences between the Balkan Info/Alarm-Phone and the Watch the Med Alarmphone: On the one hand, it would not be possible to call rescue services in the types of situations encountered on the Balkan route. Ways to intervene in certain instances would have to be developed on our own. On the other hand, most calls would not be emergency calls for which real time reaction would be needed. It would probably be more about information sharing or psychological support. This could be established through time, which would take away immediate pressure from the shift teams.

Beforehand it would need to be clarified which information and support could be provided and which could not. The information given out would differ between the different countries and regions. The shift teams would therefore need some kind of

“telephone-book” where they would be able to find information and numbers to further connect the people who call. The spectrum would reach from concrete support in emergency situations, medical support, possible accommodation, legal aid and information about state practices. Much capacity would also be spent on giving psychological support by encouraging and listening to the people on the move. Push-Backs and abuses by the police, military, border guards and the civil defence are further to be more closely documented. It would also provide a common platform where violence, state failure and the decline of basic rights to people on the move could be publicly scandalised. The Info-phone could also be important for detainees who are looking for an outside contact and are in need of legal support.

Detecting the different needs in different countries

The Info/[Alarm](#)-phone can only materialise if there is to be a strong collaboration with local, on-the-ground support structures. The project could open the possibility of strengthening the transnational networks and support structures by spreading information about different realities in different countries. It has to be identified what type of structures need to be further established in which countries.

The knowledge of state practices is already being shared through existing transnational networks. Through the Info/[Alarm](#)-Phone this knowledge could reach more people on the move. Through the direct contact with the people [travellingtraveling](#) along the route, valuable information can further be gathered and archived for the use of people [travellingtraveling](#) after them. The phone could build on and widen the existing structures of the [w2eu.info Webguide](#) and the Route Information.

For now, we would suggest to pre-discuss the ideas with as many people as possible. We would further encourage local groups to discuss the proposal and ~~to~~ then [to](#) talk over the feedbacks and suggestions for the implementation of such an Info/Alarm-Phone at the NoBorder Camp.

The requirements that need to be clarified beforehand:

- Regional conditions
- Personnel requirements
- The support provided
- The financial possibilities
- The technical requirements