

border rescue



Refugees drown at sea or in a river forming a national border; they freeze to death crossing frontiers by night, suffocate in containers or commit suicide in detention centers while awaiting deportation. "Fortress Europe" is being sealed off ever more tightly. The price that the refugees have to pay to get inside this "fortress" rises ever higher. Since 1993, UNITED for Intercultural Action, an institute in Amsterdam, has documented the fates of 3,026 human beings who died while attempting to immigrate to Europe.

During the time leading up to the June 2002 EU summit meeting in Seville at which heads of state and government conferred on stricter controls over flows of immigrants and the deployment of troops to stop refugees, the art project *border rescue* began to call attention to the rising number of deaths on Europe's borders. For a timeframe of one week, Social Impact illegally crossed the EU outer border between Austria and the Czech Republic in order to investigate danger zones, seek out "safe" transit routes (by means of GPS data, video sequences, photos and maps) and to work out in actual practice tips for how refugees ought to conduct themselves. The research results have been published on the Internet. Handy guides featuring suggested immigration routes can be printed out, and the site also offers information on the asylum situation in Austria, cases of death on the EU's outer border as well as general tips on immigration and aid for those fleeing.

border rescue defines itself not only as a form of actionist protest against the EU's rigid immigration policy that only seems to solve the migration problem, but also as a subversive strategy to evade the oversimplified explanatory patterns of political policymakers. The methods used by *border rescue* are meant to set an example; their adaptation and continuation by others is expressly encouraged.

Translated from the German by Mel Greenwald