

Forest Cameras

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Describing their encounters with the police in the forest or the moments that immediately preceded them, people on the move mention cameras and similar devices for recording and monitoring, as documented in reports about pushbacks. Croatian media also refer to cameras in forests, both static and mobile, day/night, thermal imaging, i.e., infrared, binocular versions, with gyroscopic stabilizers, short or long range, as well as other visual-technological means used to monitor and capture people on the move. Publicly available decisions on the allocation of resources from European funds intended for border control, as well as the promotional activities of the Ministry of the Interior, also refer to such devices. However, aside from the cameras installed in forests and other areas or those used precisely for the purpose of monitoring the border, other cameras are also used for this purpose, for instance, those placed by hunters to monitor the movement of game or local forestry services for purposes of fire protection, preventing timber theft and disposal of bulk waste. Although such cameras should not be used for “classic surveillance” nor “control of people’s movement”, their recordings are also used in a kind of unofficial and unauthorized movement control. In addition, videos from private phones circulating on social networks, in which people on the move are caught while resting or passing by, contribute to the impression of mass surveillance, spontaneous and from below, of the movement of migrants across a territory. Thus, cameras and other related technological means, along with, for example, cutting down trees or placing concrete blocks to block roads and forest paths, play a role in constructing the forest as a hostile and dangerous environment for people on the move, as a weaponized landscape used for controlling unwanted migration (Hameršak and Pleše 2021).

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Literature

Hameršak, Marijana i Iva Pleše. 2020. "Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way. Weaponized Migration Landscapes at the Outskirts of the EU". *Etnološka tribina* 51/44, 204-221.