Counter-corridor

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The introduction of **profiling** refugees along the Balkan corridor in November 2015 consequently lead to establishing the reverse direction of movement, also called the counter-corridor (Hameršak and Pleše 2017). Those who were not allowed to continue along the corridor to the west, who were returned to the previous country by police forces along the corridor, moved backwards along the counter-corridor, towards the east. The Austrian police returned people to Slovenia, the Slovenian police returned people to Croatia, and the Croatian police returned people to Serbia, establishing a pattern of **pushbacks** that, after the closure of the corridor, would become a mass every-day occurrence on the borders in question. This reverse direction of movement was active in the corridor until the complete closure of the borders for refugees in March 2016, and was characterized by constant improvisation and changes of direction, and only partially, sometimes not even that, overlapped with the route of the corridor to the west.

As shown by reports from that period, refugees were returned to the preceding country of transit in different ways, in secret, more or less (in)formally, in groups or individually. Readmission procedures were sometimes initiated, and sometimes groups of people were simply left at border crossings or along the border, from where they were expelled with physical violence to the preceding country along the route of the corridor. In some cases, people returned to the border between Slovenia and Croatia were taken by the Croatian police to the Zagreb railway station, sometimes they were taken to the **Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb**, and sometimes to the **Slavonski Brod camp** or to Serbia. In other instances, they would be sent again, together with other refugees, along the corridor towards the west, after a new registration and “repairing” their identity (cf. Hameršak and Pleše 2017: 27).

While the corridor was still active, Western European countries, primarily Germany, Austria and Switzerland, established another type of mass backward movement based on the Dublin Regulation. This movement was soon called the Balkan route reversed, and was used to deport hundreds of refugees, who reached those countries via the corridor, to Croatia after many months had passed from the closure of the corridor.

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Literature

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