



Roundtable II: Responses by Luca Rainieri

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What are the intended/unintended consequences of anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking policies?

Within fragile countries of the European neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood, anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking policies do not take place in a vacuum. They are often part of a broader set of policies through which external actors aim to shape local institutions in pursuit of several objectives. Border policies are thus part of a more comprehensive package of security measures and reforms, tasked with fighting a number of different threats.

Migration is locally seen as a resilience strategy, and trafficking generates profits unparalleled by legal activities - like in Niger for instance. The informal economy of migratory flows fosters corruption, but can also contribute to the hybrid stability of fragile regimes.

Constraining, containing and fighting human mobility, then, can be in contradiction with other security imperatives, such as clamping down on violent extremism and terrorism. In the long run, however, the criminalisation of local practices seen as legitimate and profitable - including “irregular” migration - can foster the entrenchment of corruption, which in turn is likely to undermine the



stability of the state. Like the war on drugs, the war against irregular migration - with its the repeated failures - testifies to the hypocrisy of responses that often become part of the problem itself, yet are maintained due to ideological motives.

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