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UN expert launches study to assess migrants' rights in European border region



Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants François Crépeau

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A United Nations expert will kick off on Monday a one-year study to assess the impact that migration policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region have on the human rights of migrants, focusing on the management of the European Union's external borders.

“Coupled with the development of the Schengen Agreement and the strong political discourse surrounding migration in Europe, the purpose of this study is to examine these mechanisms and approaches from a human rights perspective, looking at the impact of policy developments made in Brussels on those migrants who find themselves at border crossings,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, in a [news release](#).

The year-long study, which will begin with a three-day trip to Brussels, will examine the EU directives as well as national policies in place with respect to visa regimes and border control, and will assess interception practices on land and sea, detention conditions, returns, and readmission.

Independent experts, or special rapporteurs, are appointed by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country situation or a specific human rights theme. The positions are honorary and the experts are not United Nations staff, nor are they paid for their work.

“Although migration to and from the European region is not a new phenomenon, since the 1990s the region has witnessed a sharp increase in migration movements,” Mr. Crépeau said, calling for the international community “to embrace a new, balanced discourse on migration based on equal rights, non-discrimination and dignity, as well as on reality.”

While in Brussels, the Special Rapporteur will meet with a range of EU officials to discuss various policies and laws involved in the management of the EU’s external borders.

Mr. Crépeau will also travel to various key transit countries during his study – including Turkey, Tunisia, Greece and Italy – where he will request to visit reception centres, shelters and border points, and will meet with national authorities responsible for border control and migration, as well as civil society organisations.

The results of Mr. Crépeau’s study will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2013.

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