

**BUILDING ALTERNATIVES:
VYTVÁŘÍME ALTERNATIVY:**
2ND CONGRESS OF THE  **EuropeanLEFT**
PRAGUE, NOVEMBER 23-25, 2007

ADOPTED MOTION

Europe: a space of freedom and security, democracy and transparency

On June 14th 1985, the Benelux countries, France and Germany signed the Schengen Convention and thereby allowed freedom of internal travel between their countries. A short while later, the Convention was also ratified by Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Austria, and finally the five Scandinavian countries. With the expansion of the EU in 2004 to include ten more countries, the area governed by the Convention was supposed to expand to include all EU member states. However, the opening of further borders has been delayed by technical issues. This is because technology, or more precisely the Schengen Information System, which has been in use for twelve years, serves as a replacement for border controls. In September 2006, the EU Commissioner Franco Frattini had to admit that the launch of the upgraded SIS II would have to be delayed. The main problem was, as expected, the lack of data. Biometric photographs and fingerprints are supposed to be saved in the new system. Now, an intermediate solution (SIS one 4 all) should let the barriers on the borders to the east be raised in January 2008. However, the intermediate solution and the planned SIS II will not just make travel easier for millions of EU citizens. The extension of Schengen will also bring further erosion of civil rights and freedoms.

The European Left, which is holding its second party congress in the Czech Republic, greets the opening of the European Union's borders with its (now not so) new member states with enthusiasm. This step, and the equal treatment of all EU citizens, is overdue. At the same time however, we remain critical: the Schengen Information System furthers the militarisation of the EU from inside, and its isolation from outside.

1. The saving of millions of pieces of biometric data, without consideration of the consequences, at a European level, we consider unacceptable. Science has proved that biometric data are not one hundred percent reliable (margin of error: 10 percent)
2. Allowing the secret services access to the Schengen database as planned would be a further attack on civil rights and freedoms. Information acquired through secret services does not necessarily depend on provable facts or things that can be proved in court, but is mostly speculative. Opening the SIS to the secret services would mean a further blurring of the boundary between police and secret services. The European Left therefore advocates the separation of police from the secret service across Europe.

MOTION

3. We are critical of the construction of the SIS without a framework agreement on the saving of personal data. Such an agreement, which has been delayed and softened over the years, is extremely necessary.

4. There is also little clarity about the criteria for entering a person's data into the SIS. In this way a national of a third party state can be refused entry, if he represents "a threat to public order, public safety or national security". The application of this nebulous formula varies from country to country. This formula serves as an instrument for the criminalisation of, for example, politically active people, the G8 protesters or the alternative European summit. In short: it will be used to shut down alternative political arenas.

We request the Executive Board of the EL to consequently monitor the actual developments in European border control and to launch an awareness-raising campaign for the public to be informed about these practices, including human rights restrictions involved. We further ask the Executive Board to support initiatives in the context of the Summer University to promote actions and further information gathering on border control analysis to this end.