

Scirocco - Latest News from Italy

15.07.2026: "Disappointing and Shameful" – EU Delegation Denied Full Access to Deportation Detention Centre in Albania

On [29 June](#), a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from the left-wing Greens/EFA Group visited the Italian deportation detention centre in Gjadër, Albania. In addition to conducting a general inspection of the facility and assessing the situation of those detained there, the delegation sought to examine whether the centre is currently being transformed into a European offshore return hub.

With the [Return Regulation](#) adopted by the European Parliament [last month](#) - approved through the alliance of right-wing and conservative parliamentary groups - the establishment of return centres outside the European Union has now been formally legalised. Despite the fact that the centres in Albania have so far proven to be a failure in every respect, the offshore model has thus become an official pillar of the [European Union's migration strategy](#).

However, these centres are not only fundamentally incompatible with the European principles of the rule of law and human dignity, but also represent a logistical and financial disaster. People who have committed no crime are being detained de facto under inhumane conditions for an indefinite period. Although the centres in Albania have a capacity of up to [1,000 people](#), no more than 100 individuals have been held in Gjadër at any point since its opening in 2024. According to MEP Cristina Guarda, who was part of the delegation and shared her impressions in a private audio message following the visit, only around 10% of those detained in Gjadër have so far been returned to their countries of origin. In the remaining 90% of cases, return has not been possible for legal or technical reasons, meaning that the continued detention of these individuals lacks any legal basis.

The complete inefficiency of the centres appears even more absurd when considering the costs incurred for their construction and operation. As part of its [#Renditicontra](#) (english: #BeAware) campaign, the *Tavolo Asilo e Immigrazione (TAI)* highlighted last month that, according to ActionAid's 2025 [Trattenuti Report](#), the documented construction costs alone amount to €74 million. In addition, there are substantial personnel and transport costs, as well as ongoing operational expenses, all of which are financed entirely by Italian taxpayers. While independent access to official figures is currently impossible, estimates of the total costs of the two centres to date range between [€650 million](#) and [€1 billion](#). Instead of investing in an effective integration policy that respects and upholds the fundamental rights of migrants, Italy and the EU are financing an empty narrative of symbolic border deterrence.

The full extent of the consequences of this narrative became once again unmistakably clear during the MEPs' visit. Throughout their stay, the delegation was granted only severely restricted access to the facility and to relevant information. [The Italian police](#), responsible for managing the centre, denied entry to two members of the delegation who were not MEPs, without providing any reasonable justification. The remaining MEPs were refused access to the detention cells. In doing so, the authorities not only prevented a comprehensive inspection of the conditions inside the centre but also

obstructed direct and independent communication between the parliamentarians and those detained.

Despite what one Italian MEP described as an attempt by the Italian government to *“hide the truth”*, the actual conditions inside the centres are difficult to conceal. Four people are confined together in small rooms, there are no communal living spaces, numerous cases of self-harm have been reported, six suicide attempts have already been documented, and the misuse of psychotropic medication is widespread. These findings are by no means new. Similar conditions have already been extensively documented through previous inspections of Italian CPRs (Centres for Repatriation) as well as through testimonies from current and former detainees. Likewise, the extensive lack of transparency surrounding information about deportation detention centres has long been recognised as a defining characteristic of Italy’s CPR system.

Dutch MEP Tineke Strik described the visit as *“disappointing and shameful”*. While the European Commission consistently claims that human rights will be guaranteed in the planned European “Return Hubs,” Members of the European Parliament - who are legally entitled to inspect these facilities - were denied the opportunity to verify whether these rights are actually being respected.

Although, according to the visiting MEPs, the Gjadër centre does not yet appear to be operating as a European “Return Hub,” there is little reason to believe that future European centres will differ substantially from the existing Italian deportation detention centres in practice. All too often European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has described these facilities as a *“blueprint”* for Europe.

We therefore call for an end to a policy of detention that has increasingly become the dominant paradigm of migration policy not only in Italy but across Europe. Beyond its obvious inefficiency, this policy places an enormous financial burden on society while, above all, causing immeasurable human suffering.