



Mr Francois Crepeau, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants spoke at a press conference today in Brussels

Mr Crepeau presented his findings from his annual report to the Human Rights Council on the management of the external borders of the European Union and its impact on the human rights of migrants.

Mr Crepeau opened by saying, “the status quo is unsustainable in the long term”. He added that the borders are porous, “and democratic borders even more so”; by trying to seal these borders we just end up creating an underground market for smugglers.

More than 200,000 migrants and asylum seekers arrived in Europe by sea in 2014, compared with 80,000 in 2013 (according to current estimates). So far this year, Europe has received over 100,000 migrants and asylum seekers who have arrived by boat, with some frontline states

reporting daily arrivals.

“Now, do we want to manage the situation, or let smugglers manage it? Managing the situation is simply called resettlement. It is not difficult technically – it is difficult only politically”, stated Mr Crepeau.

The Special Rapporteur further stressed, “to avoid smuggling, we need to bank on mobility, it’s by investing in mobility that we can undercut the market for smugglers. If we want to control mobility, we must incentivise the migrants to come to the border guards and not the smugglers. Governments should offer mobility solutions that are better and cheaper than the solutions provided by smugglers, that’s how you outcompete someone in a market.”

He further argued that we should bank on regulated mobility and not on closure because “closure simply doesn’t work; by closing borders in the name of controlling the borders, we have actually lost control of the borders.”

