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**DEFEND EUROPE/
IDENTITARIAN BRIEFING**

JULY 2017

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DEFEND EUROPE/ IDENTITARIAN BRIEFING

Defend Europe is an attempt by far-right activists to confront and block humanitarian rescue ships operating in the Mediterranean.

It is being led by key members of the European 'Identitarian' movement, a collection of far-right activists operating in France, Germany, Austria and Italy.

They aim to disrupt and inhibit the vital efforts of NGOs saving the lives of migrants and refugees – many of whom are children – crossing the Mediterranean this summer.

More than 2,000 people have died on the Mediterranean already this year, and over 5,000 last year.

This confrontational and dangerous project is organised by far-right activists with a long track record of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant activism and while organised by Europeans it is being supported, funded and promoted by the extreme far-right around the world.

So far the Identitarians have only launched one operation on a small boat, but they have now raised the funds to charter a sea-going vessel with space for a crew of 25.



**“NOW WE ARE ABLE
TO ORGANISE A REAL
MISSION WITH A BIG SHIP
THAT WILL CRUISE IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN AND
BLOCK THOSE NGO SHIPS
FROM GOING TO THE
LIBYAN COAST.”**

**MARTIN SELLNER,
Leader of Defend Europe.**

THE SHIP

The vessel they claim is theirs is actually a Finnish-made research vessel named 'Suunta'. This ship is nearly 40m long and has a gross tonnage of 422. According to Defend Europe the ship has "a range of 3000 nautical miles", a "place for a crew of 25", and a "crane for RIBs [small inflatable boats]".

We have tracked down the Suunta to the port of Djibouti off the east coast of Africa which fits in with the Identitarians' own claims that their "biggest problem now is, that our ship is not on the Mediterranean sea. It needs to be transferred from a different ocean".

Furthermore, we believe the ship is due to depart Djibouti and arrive at Port Suez on 13 July at 03:00, with a view to travelling onward through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean to begin their mission.

WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO

Those behind Defend Europe have stated that they intend to engage in an "Identitarian Search and Rescue" mission¹. On their fundraising page and in their promotional videos they have stated this will involve following and monitoring NGO

ships and informing the Libyan coastguard of the NGOs' activities.

They have also stated they will block the NGO ships on the seas², "confront"³ them when they do something illegal, and take anyone they find in distress back to the Libyan coast "just as law proscribes it"⁴.

The FAQ page of the Defend Europe site has also previously stated that they aim to cause the NGOs' ships to alter their routes and drain the charities of their financial and organisational resources. Their current FAQ page states they will also "disrupt the human trafficking rings by sinking the abandoned boats they leave behind" and "offer the Libyan Coastguard [their] support as [a] recon-ship".

In a video following their initial blocking of an NGO ship they also stated that they would "weaponise the internet" to help track the NGO ships, relying on the users of the 4chan.org/pol/ forum to report ship movements to various authorities. The forum's community is renowned for involvement in many social media political disinformation campaigns.

There have also been reports of far-right activists seeking to gather information on the operations of search and rescue (SAR) NGOs and even SAR workers themselves.





WHAT IS THE IDENTITARIAN MOVEMENT?

The Identitarian movement is a pan-European, far-right movement that started in France in 2012 with the launch of Génération Identitaire, the youth wing of the far-right Bloc Identitaire. It has since spread across the continent with affiliated groups, the most prominent of which are based in Germany, Italy, and Austria.

The movement sees itself as a 'meta-political project' that aims to protect European identity. This manifests itself as opposition to immigration, Islam and refugees and the supposed social and political elites that they believe advance a multicultural and socially left wing agenda.

One of the movement's key activists, Markus Willinger, rails against political elites who 'disgust us' and condemns the increasing acceptance of LGBT+ people in society (which he refers to as 'the union of nothingness), calling instead for

a return to traditional gender roles as 'Women want to be conquered'. He also outright rejects multiculturalism stating, 'we don't want Mehmed and Mustafa to become Europeans' and like the New Right philosopher de Benoist advocates instead for ethnopluralism (the notion that ethnic groups ought to be geographically separated).

The symbol of the movement is a black and yellow lambda and is taken from the shields of the Spartan army.

The Identitarian movement is well known for its provocative and controversial stunts, usually directed against Muslims and immigrants, with a view to raising funds and increasing their public profile.

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vxud1nEWwFE>
- 2 <https://youtu.be/CMSqFlyk9sM?t=465>
- 3 <https://www.wesearchr.com/bounties/defend-europe-identitarian-sar-mission-on-the-libyan-coast>
- 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vxud1nEWwFE>

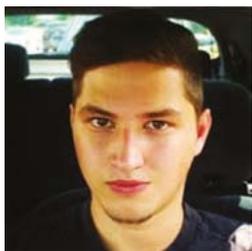
KEY DEFEND EUROPE ACTIVISTS



Martin Sellner

Martin Sellner is the co-leader of Identitare Bewegung Osterreich, the Austrian branch of the Identitarian movement. Born and based in Vienna, he is a philosophy and law student,

graphic artist, and co-owner of the “patriotic lifestyle” brand Phalanx Europa. He often acts as a figurehead of the Identitarian movement, especially online through his personal, as well as his ‘Identitarian View’, YouTube channels. He has also contributed to the German right-wing journal Secession and has created an app for “patriots” to network, known as Patriot Peer.



Patrick Lenart

Patrick Lenart is the co-leader of Identitare Bewegung Osterreich (IBO), the Austrian branch of the Identitarian movement, and was previously head of the IBO branch in Styria,

a southern Austrian state. Lenart was born in the southern Austrian state of Carinthia and is based in the Styrian capital of Graz, where he studies philosophy and law.



Daniel Fiß

Daniel Fiß is the leader of Identitare Bewegung Deutschland, the German branch of the Identitarian movement. Born and based in Rostock, Germany, Fiß studies political science

and was previously a member of the far-right National Democratic Party of Germany’s (NPD) youth wing. He maintains connections with the right-wing populist party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), and has stated that the party could become the Identitarians “extended arm”.



Clement Galant

Clement Galant is a leading activist in the French Generation Identitaire movement, the French branch of the Identitarian movement (itself a development of the original,

French ‘Bloc Identitaire’ movement).



Lorenzo Fiato

Lorenzo Fiato is the leader of Generazione Identitaria, the Italian branch of the Identitarian movement. Based in Milan and studying political science, he has been active in leading

the Identitarian’s ‘Defend Europe’ campaign to disrupt humanitarian NGO ships in the Mediterranean.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE:

- <http://hopenoathate.org.uk/2017/06/29/details-far-right-mission-hinder-ngo-rescue-missions-med/>
- <http://hopenoathate.org.uk/2017/06/27/far-right-secure-ship-disrupt-mediterranean-ngos/>
- <http://hopenoathate.org.uk/2017/05/15/anti-immigrant-far-right-takes-seas/>

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