This paper is an occasion to present the migrants’ situation in France through the example of the region Nord - Pas-de-Calais, and more precisely the sadly notorious « jungles » in this region. Since 2000 the French government has continued to destroy the refugee camps, to displace them further in the hope of making them invisible. But in 2015, between 6 000 and 9 000 people were living in the biggest refugee camp in France, which is also the biggest slum in the country. Through the example of Calais i will try to show how national and European migration policies contributed to the creation of this “jungle” in the North of France.

Pas-de-Calais jungles

Since 2000 migrants from different countries have arrived in the North of France. This arrival reflects the conflicts of the contemporary world. The last few years Eritreans, Iraqis, Sudanese, Afghans and more recently Libyans and Syrians arrived in this part of France. Those nationalities leave no doubt about the need for protection of the populations concerned. As explain UNHCR « the situation of migrants on the coast of the Channel and the North Sea has been often presented in the past as being the single issue of irregular migration. However, the predominance among them of Afghans, Sudanese [...] presumed that the majority of these people come from countries where the political situation is unstable or conflicting, or from countries where the Humans right is subject to violations »¹. According to this declaration we can say that most of the migrants can be considered as refugees.

Today many makeshift camps are settled on the coastal side of France and of Belgium but also inland close to highways and cities on the road to Calais. Between 15 000 and 18 000 people live in 3 or 4 camps known as « jungles ». Calais is a port city, located just 30 kilometers from the English coast, and has the biggest jungle, in which between 6 000 and 9 000 people live. Dunkerque, another port city near Calais, received between 3 000

and 5 000 refugees. But there are also a lot of smaller camps in the region that received between 50 and 600 people.

As you can see in the map below, almost all the camps are situated in the north of France and in Belgium. If the "jungles" have formed in this part of France it is because the refugees wishing to join England.

« Jungles » in 2014. Map by Jérémy Nourri, Terre d'Errance, Norrent-Fontes

The jungles are slums built in the outskirts of cities, located 5 to 15 kilometers from them. Since 2000 various associations and NGO regularly denounce the living conditions in these camps. The main camp in Calais is the only one to have showers; the others don’t have sanitary facilities. Even in the main camp in Calais there aren’t enough showers for the number of people and sometimes it takes several hours to be able to wash. In front of the inertia of the public authorities, NGO intervened to install toilets or wooden huts, to distribute food or to offer medical consultations and nursing.
The refugees arrive in Calais after many months of struggle. They arrive by the sea, through Greece and Italy, or by the land, through Eastern Europe. Their physical condition isn't good when they arrive because they are already weakened by weeks or months of travel. But it can get worse with the living condition on the camps. The nurse, working for Doctors of the World, talks about infected wounds, dental problems, unfollowed pregnancies, fractures, lung diseases due to cold and moisture, skin diseases such as scabies.

Malnutrition is also a scourge in these camps, one meal a day is distributed by the state but not everyone has access to it. They have to wait around 3 hours to receive the meal.

*People queue outside the Calais camp for food. Photograph: Christian Sinibaldi, The Guardian*

The camps are made of tents and shelters built with wood pallets, plastic bags, tarpaulins, with material recovery. The same processes are used in South Africa and in France as you can see on the picture below.
The main camp in Calais also became the place where refugees live and protest. Indeed small groceries shops are open as well as libraries, churches, mosques, theater. What was meant to be a transit camps is finally transformed into a sustainable camps.

Sky picture of the « jungle ». Photograph : Jim Bennett, The Sun
In addition to the deplorable living conditions refugees have to face the tensions between them in the camps, the constant police checks, tear gas and police violence and the animosity of part of the population (insults, physical violence). Just in Calais MSF signed 90 certificates for police violence in the past few months.

In January 2016 the government decided to destroy a part of the jungle, the camps he had himself created a year ago to bring migrants out of the town. The destroyed part corresponds to half of the slum. To relocate the people the government has brought heated containers on the site that can accommodate 1500 people. For others, places in reception centers in 70 cities in France, far from Calais. According to associations, people living in this part of the "jungle" live now in the North part of the camp.

![Iranian migrant mouth sewn protesting against the destruction of the southern part of the Calais camp. Photograph: Michel Spingler, France Info](image)

**Nord – Pas-de-Calais**

For the past 20 years the North of France has been dealing with the arrival of migrants. Indeed this area is on the way to England, the final destination for all the refugees. We will see that England seems to be the last chance for the migrants, face to the migration policies in European Union and France.
France has a long history of migrations. Thousands of migrant workers arrived from all over Europe (Italian, Portuguese, Polish ...) and from the North Africa (Morrocan, Algerian, Tunisian ...) during decades. The North is a former industrial and mining region, employing a large foreign labor.

In the 1970 the mines close, the weight of industry in the region is increasingly weak facing globalization and relocation of industries. The region faces a higher unemployment rate than the national average, between 13 and 14 % for the region compared to 10 % for France. Looking more precisely, we can see that the town of Calais has an unemployment rate of 26% and Dunkerque of 20%.

The region is characterized by a high rate for the National Front (FN), a political far right party advocating the closure of borders, the return of migrants even in countries in war, raising standards of asylum, the national preference for employment. Demonstrations against migrants have been organized for few months. At the last regional elections the FN won 50% of votes in Calais. The « migration crisis » in Europe is one of the pet subject of this political party. Demonstrations against migrants related to this movement took place and the speech of the leader of the party, Marine Le Pen, are very violent against refugees. She even speaks of "bacterial immigration" (referring to the scabies outbreak suffered by people living in the "jungle" of Calais). She advocates an even tougher policy than the one already implemented by the region.

Since 2000 the region and the municipality has continued to destroy, repel refugee camps away from city centers and housing, out of sight of all. First they opened a camp in Sangatte, 10 kilometers away from the city, then in 2002 they decided to close the Sangatte camp run by the Red Cross because the center was overcrowded. Municipalities evoke health problems to destroy the refugee camps without offering sustainable solutions, not hosting or in the other side of France. This policy marks a will to disperse migrants, to make them invisible, the dispersion of structures is aimed to make believe in the disappearance of those who benefit. But as we have seen with the "jungles" this strategy is a failure.

The associations have gradually substituted the State owing to his failure. While it doesn’t
comply with the Directive of the European Union of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers, the French Government relies on the voluntary association sector to fill the shortcomings of his own.

The voluntary sector is central to the management of migrant populations and become a key player for them. They provide a variety of missions in different camps: food distribution, French lessons, legal aid, medical aid…

In some cases local politicians and associations join. This is the case for the mayor of Grande Synthe, shared hosting 3,000 migrants, and Doctors without Borders. They build a refugee camps to international standards to rehouse 3,000 migrants. The state opposes the project on the grounds that the safety standards are not good (wooden huts and therefore possibility of fire). Doctors without Borders finances 2,5 millions euros and the municipality 500 000 thousand euros.

Migrants settling in the refugee camps in Grande Synthe. Photograph: Aimée Thirion, Libération

Right now about 10 police companies, out of the 60 companies in France, are deployed in Calais and the surrounding area. About 1 200 policemen. They are present around the camps
but also on highways and around the port of Calais. Privileged places of passage for migrants heading for England. They hide in trucks, try to enter the Channel Tunnel depends of their life. They are hit by cars or trucks, die suffocated in trucks, killed in the tunnel under the sea hit by train.

This border is more difficult to cross, Calais has gradually became a city of "storage" of migrants and not just a passing city. Gradually, the number of these exiles near Calais has increased and their period of "living" has grown.

Trying to limit the number of migrants in the north, the government has set up 100 reception and orientation centers throughout France over the past year. The concept of these new emergency shelters ? Allow refugees to continue their administrative procedures, far from Calais and in good conditions, on a « voluntary basis ». We will see that many migrants are afraid to join these centers because of the French and European migration policy.

**The french migration policies**

Political asylum, humanitarian protection, the terms of the reception or rejection of refugees are always a political choice of the state. The defense of human rights is the symbol of the democratic countries. The control of entry into the country and foreign policy are essential attributes of state sovereignty. We will see how border controls and foreign policy took precedence over the refugee policies. We have already seen that in Pas-de-Calais region there is a large police and a glaring lack of shelters for refugees who are mostly supported by associations.

While the interior minister has called a policy between "firmness and humanity", European bodies, international and associations denounce inhumane reception conditions for already many years.

The police pressure against migrants has already been mentioned. Physical violence ( tear gas, property destruction ) are accompanied by psychological pressures. Interpellations on meal distribution sites are reported. The government has also begun to set quotas for arrests of refugees. With targets for deportations set by the government, arrests are increasing, while...
only a minority of the exiles of the coast may be removed: many can be returned to their country of origin, usually because of technical barriers (inability to establish pass) but also because of an implicit political will to tolerate (with exceptions) nationals of countries at war.

Migrants are not the only victims of this repressive policy. Activists and associations are also targeted by the police. The arrest of a woman who charged mobile phones of migrants is thus reported. Indeed one of the most effective weapons that governments have is probably the criminalization of assistance, through several laws including the offense of contempt, the crime of rebellion and Article L 622-1 of Ceseda which provides a sentence of five years and a fine of 30,000 euros for any person who "direct or indirect assistance, facilitates or attempts to facilitate the entry, movement, or residence of a foreigner". The fate of volunteers arrested while driving exiles in hospital raided because they were suspected to accommodate foreign or tapped or placed in custody.

The government also uses misinformation regarding the legal procedures. One example is the non-information of immigrants' rights during arrest and the minutes of proceedings. Migrants are reluctant to seek asylum in France due in particular to the length of the proceedings (about 2 years), the lack of accommodation for asylum seekers and police violence; all of which testify to the lack of a policy for these populations. France was then supposed to become a transit country for migrants on their way to England. For the state and local authorities, it's convenient to assume that the refugees refuse to stay in France; it legitimizes their sidelined all assistive devices, including those that the law doesn't condition the legality of the residence.

The government uses the concept of the « suction effect » to justify the situation of refugees in Calais today. This concept means that the more refugee reception conditions are favorable the more they will come in France. As we have seen for over 15 years reception conditions in northern France are deplorable and the number of refugees has stopped growing the last 15 years before exploding the last 3 years accordingly to wars across the word.

The France is not alone in practicing this policy against "the suction effect", the European Union practices also this policy. Many European laws determine the lives of migrants from their entry into Europe up to the « jungle » of Calais. Now we will see the measures implemented in migration policy by the European Union and their consequences.
The European migrations policies

EU decisions begin with the establishment in 2005 of Frontex, a European Agency for the Management of External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. The role of this agency has become increasingly important, evidenced by the increase in the annual budget of Frontex; 19 million euros in 2006 and 142 million in 2015. In 2009 UNHCR had already denounced in one of these reports deterrent methods used by Frontex in the Mediterranean Sea and violations of the Geneva Convention. Indeed for the first time in 2009 a Frontex operation was the refoulement to Libya of migrants spotted in a boat in the Mediterranean sea. This event was the subject of a report by Human Rights Watch that clearly denounces the violation of the principle of non-refoulement. What today denounced Migreurop includes the fact that "European states are not meeting their international commitments in terms of protection and rescue at sea. Maritime Conventions are regularly raped by a marine policy before seeking any other thing to send these people». Frontex isn’t mandated to make maritime rescue but sometimes it is involved in rescue operations, answering the obligations of international law, when the host State of the operation asked for (all countries of the European Union sends teams forming Frontex). We can recall the number of people who lost their lives in the Mediterranean in 2015, 3770.

2 http://www.migreurop.org/article2025.html
If border protection is so important for the EU it is because the countries belonging to the Schengen area are committed to free movement between them. It’s also for this reason that Calais is a storage point, in fact England is not part of the Schengen area. Political agreements signed in 1997 between the European Union and Great Britain are a political concession to the European Union in that they derogate from the freedom of movement in its interior, one of its essential characteristics EU.

By refusing to be part of Schengen, Britain helped to move the borders of the European continent and to relocate on French territory the control of its border. From 1997, the construction of detention centers to increase their capacity, or the successive operations of securing the port and the Eurotunnel area, are evidence of the gatekeeper role provided by Calais. The personnel of these missions have also increased and diversified: the border police, customs, Eurotunnel and the SNCF, subcontractors private protection companies, British immigration or republican companies security mobilized every day on the ground as we have seen before.

Added to this, the Dublin Regulation allows the return of the person to another jurisdiction where there is a trace of his passage (an asylum application or an digitiales impressions). It’s for this reason that many migrants don’t want to ask asylum in France. They fear to have to return in the country where they arrived in Europe, often in Eastern Europe and Greece.

This is also a source of tension between the states of the European Union, the input countries like Hungary blocking migrants at its border for fear that they are inexorably returned home from other European countries. Slovenia has also made the decision to not let the migrants through its territory. Young activist says: " How many times have we done apostrophize by young people, women and men eager for advice on how to seek asylum in France without being renewed in the EU country where their fingerprints were taken? They can’t ".

The figures confirm this practice. According to the report of the Border Police of the Pas-de-Calais, in 2007, over 17,377 arrests, 2,391 people (13 %) were placed in detention, expulsions and 917 (5%) were carried out. Those forcibly removed, 80% were referred to another country of the European Union.
In recent weeks a new step was taken by the European Union. An agreement between Turkey and the European Union was signed, from April 2016 all migrants arriving in Greece will be sent to Turkey. In return Turkey benefits of substantial financial support and a resumption of negotiations on its accession to the EU.

Impose on the EU member states host a number defines refugees was proposed. But this solution has been denied by a vote in the European Parliament. Welcoming migrants is therefore voluntarily.
Europe wants to be the least attractive as possible but it’s clear that this policy doesn’t work because migrants arrive in increasing numbers over the last four years because of the wars that are taking place in Syria, Pakistan, Iraq ... This proves that border protection, deterrence and repressive migration policies taken by the European Union and France don’t work. The theory of «suction effect» seems not be permanent in the current context because migrants arriving in Europe in recent years are refugees. They flee war and no matter the dangers of the journey, the harshness of life in France, the inhuman living conditions they will continue to come.